THE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE

PSM3

Christmas 2006
Issue 82 £3.99
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PlayStation 3 | PlayStation 2 | PSP

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REVIEWED ON PS3 & PS2
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PSM3 Start

"The real next generation starts here"

Yes, we've got it. Our very first PlayStation 3 review is on page 20 and it's for arguably PS3's best launch game – the new *Call Of Duty*. Next we've got a deluge of playable PS3 code in our 14-page superfeature, alongside the first hands-on with the finished hardware. Right now there's festive fighting in the aisles as lucky Japanese and American punters try to bag themselves a Merry PS3 Christmas, but while we may have to wait until March 2007 for our festivities, there's still plenty of good news in our reviews section this month. *Final Fantasy XII*, *Guitar Hero 2* and *Call Of Duty 3* on PS2? *PES6* and *Lumines 2* on PSP? There's enough here to see anyone who loves games to the new year and beyond. Have a good one.

Daniel Griffiths Editor
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

In the making of this issue of PSM3...
8 PS3 games played
For 283 hours
1 continent saved
& 1 ecstatic mag team

The PSM3 Promise

The sharpest opinions
Every bit of the magazine is dedicated to giving you more information. If we're worried that a feature in a game isn't working, we'll not only tell you about it, but we'll have a word with the developer too.

The biggest games
Fact is, if a game makes it into the pages of PSM3 then it's something worth knowing about. PSM3 says no to lazy page fillers and boring 'me too' games.

The richest detail
We finish every game we review. Our secrets are the result of us playing the game and finding them ourselves. We've got what you want to know and tell you how you want to hear it.

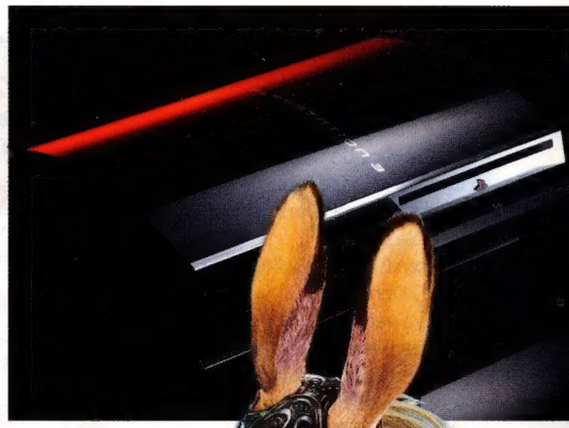
The most committed videogame mag team
The PSM3 team live and breathe PlayStation. There's no game we haven't played and there's no end to our quest for knowledge and gaming greatness.

The best DVD action
We've got the best DVD in the business. We cram it with the best PS3, PS2 and PSP games each and every month. For free.

Three to read first...

"The wait is over. And it's been worth it. PS3 is gorgeous"

We've got our own **PS3** at last. Read all about it on page 48.



"Sets the benchmark for the next-gen"

Call Of Duty 3 on PS3 – page 20

"Everything you'd expect from an FF game, and from a great adventure"

Final Fantasy XII is here at last – see our huge review on page 70

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The PlayStation 3 Magazine

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And we know *everything* about it. SPECIAL FEATURE

"The next generation starts right here" COVER FEATURE

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Playing PlayStation longer, harder, deeper.

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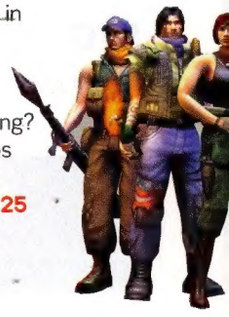

"It's a masterclass in sequel-making"

We strum our axes until our fingers get bloody in Guitar Hero 2 – page 74

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THE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE

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FEATURING Metal Gear Solid 4 | Alone In The Dark | Warhawk | Ninja Gaiden | Ridge Racer 7 Final Fantasy XII | White Knight Story | Half-Life 2 | Vice City Stories | Assassins' Creed | And more

Devil May Cry 4

Watch the latest highly-explosive trailer of *DMC4* on our DVD right this very second. Let the flashy action be absorbed by your retinas and ponder if Dante can *really* be the bad guy this time around.

LA Noire

See the mysterious trailer for Rockstar's 1940s crime epic and get excited. Want more details? Noire problem. (Gnngh) Just turn to our preview on page 30.

Afrika

Take a look at our footage and marvel at the wonder of wildlife up close. We're still not sure what *Afrika* is, but is certainly looks pretty. Perhaps it'll be like a game version of the Really Wild Show, but without Michaela Strachan. Damnit.

Ridge Racer 7

Watch this amazing new *Ridge 7* footage then ponder on the fact that we've played it and can tell you that it looks *even better* than this. Turn to page 48 now.

+ Alone In The Dark | **Warhawk** | Metal Gear 4 | **Ninja Gaiden** | Half-Life 2 | **GTA: Vice City Stories** | Battlefield 2142 | **Assassin's Creed** | Final Fantasy XII | **More**

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Frontline

Hard news, all PlayStation action

PS3 ONLINE

Resistance developer attacks PS3's online plans

Triple-A Sony game set to snub PlayStation 3's online network

As we go to press, PS3's online service is *finally* up and running – but with two weeks until the US launch on November 17, its flexible structure is sparking confusion. Sony are *still* debating game, demo and micro-transactions costs and there's no unifying 'Gamer Score' system like Xbox Live. The system has already been blasted as 'busted' by Xbox Technical Director Andre Vignaud – but why has it?

The 'problem', ironically, stems from PS3's flexible 'open source' approach to online gaming. PS3 comes equipped with its own buddy list, messaging, voice chat and video chat services, but developers are free to partner with any online gaming interface (like Xfire) they wish. Oddly, US launch game *Resistance: Fall of Man*, with its 40-player online matches, *doesn't* use PS3's in-built matching services. Worst case? Your *Resistance* buddy lists will differ from your in-built PS3 buddy lists, and you'll need a series of ID/password logins for every game you play – a scenario which Sony flatly denies.

On the plus side PS3 lets you 'surf' the net from the comfort of your sofa, with Flash support for viewing 'complex' sites like YouTube. The machine supports up to six 'live' browser windows at any time (cycle with L2/R2), with simple navigation – either plug in a USB/Bluetooth keyboard, or type URLs with a mobile phone-style quick key system. The right analogue stick scrolls pages up/down, while the left stick controls the mouse cursor.

The PS Store looks slick, with neat sub-menus reminiscent of iTunes/YouTube – there's a 'Featured Items' list on the main page with all the newest demos, trailers and downloads. You'll be able to download PSone games – titles to be confirmed – for play on your PSP and, later, PS3. Best of all, there will be 40 unique downloadable PS3 games – see 'Choice' on your right – plus, four or five PS3 demos including AAA titles like *MotorStorm* from launch day.

Shop Til You Drop

Sony's PlayStation Network doesn't have a name. That's because it's all part of the PlayStation experience, they say. We say, if it did have a name it would probably be called 'Shop' because that's the bit where Sony are doing all their work. Buy new songs for *SingStar*, buy the entire game to insert into your *Gran Turismo HD* shell... We can only hope that Sony get a grip on online play before we end up in a multi-user, multi-sign-in PS2-style mess.

ON THE DISC
See the latest PS3 movies on the disc now
PS3/Latest

Resist it *Resistance: Fall Of Man* will not use Sony's own online network in favour of one of its own.

Cost? HD trailers and game footage *should* be free, but arcade games and premium content (cars, weapons and so forth) range from $0.99 to $14.99. Disappointingly, you may have to pay for PS3 game demos – which are free on Xbox Live. It sounds like a rip off, but Sony don't charge for core online play while Xbox Live costs £40 a year. Typically, Sony are keen to explain how you *pay* however – you're prompted to assign a credit card to your ID when you first sign up to the network.

After the 'open source' confusion of PS2 online, we're a little worried by Sony's approach to PS3. Our bet? *Resistance* snubbed PS3's in-built lobby services because it simply wasn't ready – while *THP8* had to drop its online component *entirely*. More next month...

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony | **ETA** March 2007

Choice What are the best downloadable games?

With 40 full arcade-style games in the pipeline, here's our top four...

Blast Factor

Fully tilt-enabled, 1080p, arcade gaming where you blast through specimen cells doing something, er, we can't understand. This was the game Phil Harrison used to demo the PS Store at a recent online demo, so at least it exists. More details to follow next month.

flOw

Premiered at TGS, Sony's hypnotic 1080p title is like a cross between *Ecco The Dolphin*, *Snake* and *Rez*, as you use the tilt pad to traverse plains and absorb matter – all the while growing in size, subjecting the organism to a form of lazy inertia. The tilt function works superbly.

Lemmings 2

The best *Lemmings* ever, available on PS3 – we suspect it's merely a 'name' franchise to compete with similar Xbox Live Arcade offerings. We're hoping this isn't one of the $14.99 (about £8) games, since you could probably pick up a similar PSP/PS2 version for far cheaper.

Go Sudoku

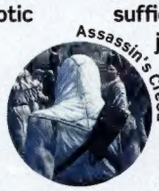
Don't worry Mum/Gran/Dad/Sister, there'll be games for you too, starting with every pseudo-intellectual's favourite time waster, Sudoku. No Carol Vorderman, mind – but we suspect it's only a matter of time. Expect *Brain Training*-style quizzes as the service grows.

ON THE DISC
See *Assassin's Creed* put PS3 through its paces
PS3/Coming Soon

The Opinionator

"The US PS3 launch line up has no games worth £50"

Let's start with the pick of the bunch – *MotorStorm*. While it's the best way to show off your PS3, with impressive physics, previously unseen particle effects and truly chaotic AI, it's still a knockabout, fairly lightweight, racer – unless the mission structure is more engrossing than our preview code suggests. At best, we'd be happy to play it if it came bundled free with the machine. Which it won't. File under: fun tech demo. Same goes for the excellent, but painfully familiar *Ridge Racer 7* – it's not new or deep enough to justify the, say, £50 Sony might charge in the UK.



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Who cares?

Genji: Days of the Blade? Hi-res version of the PS2 game. *Resistance*? Challenging, but perfunctory. *F.E.A.R.*? As decent on PS3 as it was on PC. *Oblivion*? Ditto, but on Xbox 360. New *Sonic*? Hmm... *Full Auto 2*? *Seriously*. Most of the solid, actually good, games in the launch line up are either on Xbox 360, or shiny retreads of familar franchises – step forwards *Call Of Duty*, *Need for Speed Carbon* and *Fight Night Round 3*. No game is sufficiently innovative or jaw dropping, to justify the £1000 odd outlay on your HDTV and PS3. The line up is strong as a *portfolio* – but there's no killer, must-buy, app you haven't played before or couldn't play elsewhere. And, frankly, that's a real worry.

Ray of light

On the bright side, the UK launch *will* have some AAA+ games – there's *Assassin's Creed*, Free Rad's shooter *Haze* and Valve's insane value *Half-Life 2* package, with *Team Fortress 2* and *Portal* games. With *Burnout 5*, *DMC4* and *Winning Eleven* (Japanese *PES*) months behind – plus *MGS4* and *GTA4* before Christmas 2007 – even the bitterest cynic will struggle to surpress a smile. Roll on the new year. **Dan Dawkins**

Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS?

PS3's pad's batteries will go flat and they can't be replaced.

THE TRUTH

OK, so the Sixaxis pad won't have a removable battery pack, relying entirely on its in-built rechargeable unit. Doom-mongers have been moaning about this, complaining that if the pad suffers from 'memory effect' – when the battery 'forgets' how much its recharge capacity is – that means the unit is screwed. Not to worry, though. Sony reckon that "Latest generation Lithium polymer batteries hardly suffer any memory effect at all" and that "it'll be many years before there's any degredation in terms of battery performance" and say that if – and that's just 'if', not 'when' – your battery pack goes up the spout, they'll replace your pad free of charge. Panic averted. Again. Next made-up crisis, please.

Thrill List

The latest news on PlayStation's hottest games, every issue

1 Skate

EA unveil 'Big Black' MTV link

EA's rootsy *Tony Hawk* rival might be "for skaters, by skaters", with a remit to avoid the comedy excess, button-mashing and non-skate material, that characterised, say, Activision's *THUG2*, but that hasn't stopped the world's biggest software publisher signing up comedy duo Big Black and Rob Dyrdek – stars of MTV's forthcoming Jackass-style reality show 'Rob and Big' – for inclusion in Skate. The show looks *actually* funny – the twist being that Big Black is a security guard who protects skater Rob *from* security guards – but we hope Skate sticks to core principles.

Pub EA | **Dev** EA Black Box | **ETA** 2007

Too Cole for school Street skater Chris Cole is the latest addition to *Skate*.

Rob and Big Bodyguard 'Big Black' and Rob Dyrdek star in EA's *Skate* – can you guess which one is which?

2 The Darkness
Comic-inspired FPS gets darker

Part NYPD Blue-style crime drama, part Crow-inspired supernatural thriller, *The Darkness* is shaping up as PS3's grizzliest FPS. At any time during play you can call upon the powers of the 'Darkness' – a legion of hideous beasties with unique personalities, that act as powerful melee weapons allowing you to throw objects around with a pair of extendable tentacles, or saw off or *power drill* their heads. The graphics engine is incredibly sophisticated, with technology that lets the developers run video in real-time on in-game tellies – this'll be Blu-ray assisted, with the game currently running full-length episodes of Popeye and vintage horror flick Nosferatu. The minimal HUD uses subtle colours to convey information.

Pub 2K Games | **Dev** Starbreeze | **ETA** 2007

3 Thrillville
The fun of the fair, with non of the pain

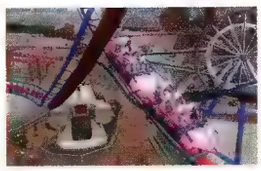
From David Braben, the creator of classic space trading game *Elite*, comes this PS2/PSP theme park sim. But don't expect a boring strategy game where you have to control your park's budget – Thrillville is designed to be fun and is full of distractions including some addictive minigames (including *R-Type* arcade tributes), the ability to actually use the rides you've created and a chat system that lets you talk to your visitors and find out what they think of the place.

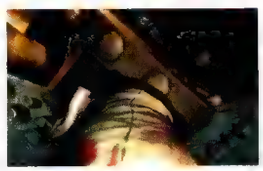
Pub Atari | **Dev** Frontier | **ETA** Nov 24th

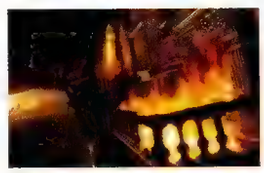
4 Alone In The Dark
A series of digestible scares

In the vein of popular American TV shows like Lost, *Alone In The Dark* is split into 'episodic' 40 minute chunks. This means that each section ends with a cliffhanger, raising the tension like a glossy HBO drama. Like *The Darkness*, the game is set in a gritty, realistic depiction of New York City. One stunning scene shows the hero hanging off a building beside Central Park and the graphics are looking incredible.

Pub Atari | **Dev** Eden Games | **ETA** 2007







Top to bottom *Thrillville* and *Alone In The Dark* – hugely contrasting themes, but equally exciting.

5 Devil May Cry 4
Producer quizzed

According to producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi, there's a "meaning" to why Dante and Nero look so similar – the biggest clue yet that the pair are linked, and that we'll play as Dante at some point. We're not sure what role new female character Kyrie plays yet, however.

Pub Capcom
Dev Capcom
ETA 2007

ON THE DISC
See more *GTA* in the form of *Liberty City Stories* now

Why We Love...

Atsushi Inaba

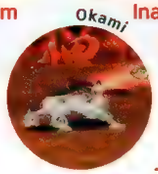
One of the great innovators – so why is he out of a job?

What has he done?

Inaba was the President and Founder of Clover (Short for 'Creativity Lover') Studio, an offshoot of Capcom responsible for *Okami*, *God Hand* and *Viewtiful Joe*. Sadly, the studio was recently closed, and Inaba left Capcom.

Why we like him?

Love it or fear it, *Okami* is a true epic with a unique visual style and a rich, sprawling feel that bears genuine comparison with the legendary Nintendo *Zelda* games; while *God Hand* is the only beat-'em-up that combines highbrow references to Brokeback Mountain with the ability to put a rival over your knee and spank them 300 feet into the sky. Inaba's games feel like genuine labours of love, not 'products'. Even his business card is a work of art: a 40 page silver card flick-book illustrating the growth of a clover leaf.


Okami

Viewtiful Joe

God Hand

Inaba was the only developer honest enough to tell us that this year's E3 was "boring" – which it was. Typically, his games were perceived as 'odd', failed to sell and Capcom had to act. Ironically, *Okami* is currently selling well in the US, and isn't due in the UK until early 2007.

What's he doing now?

Probably juggling offers from big publishers desperate to 'buy' his stamp of credibility – expect them to fail.

Who are you?
Name Atsushi Inaba **Age** Unknown
Role Ex-Head of Clover
Key Games Devil May Cry, *Viewtiful Joe*, *Okami*, *God Hand* and *Steel Battalion*.

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

Sony's US PS3 launch will be hampered by shortages – blasts publishing giant EA. "We're thinking that the **PS3 shipment** range is 500,000 to 800,000," forecasts EA CFO Warren Jenson – several hundred thousand less than the two million promised between Japan and the US before the end of the year. Upshot? With the US scrabbling for PS3s, it may mean less consoles for Europe when the machine launches in March 2007 – and if production doesn't ramp up, don't be too surprised if the UK date slips *again*. Surely not... but watch this space.

In brighter news, **GTA4's** 'exclusive' online content for Xbox 360 may not be the scoop it first appears. Latest rumours attributed to developer Rockstar North suggest that PS3 will also be getting 'exclusive' online content –

"PS3 will also get exclusive *GTA4* online content"

in the shape of additional islands linking to the main *GTA4* game world. Once again, given the nature of previous *GTA* deals – don't be surprised if the 'exclusives' are only for a set period of, say, three months, before everyone gets to play the whole game irrespective of the platform it's on.

ZOE3? Mark my words, it's coming – but Konami are holding fire. PSM3 will be first with screens as it happens. Apologies, too, for the non-appearance of **Burnout 5** on PS3 – as promised on last month's 'Next Issue' page – but I can reveal that the game will take place in an open-ended, free-roaming city, with car crashes that 'better anything in the movies' according to Creative Director Alex Ward. Cars will get 'ripped in two' with '90-100' pieces of metal flying forth compared to the 12-15 or so of the latest PS2 version. There are currently pre-production damage sequence renders doing the rounds, but PSM3 will – all being well – be first with the genuine in-game screens in the very near future.

EA are planning sequels to **Black** (PS3), **Sim City** (platform unknown), **Lord Of The Rings** (unknown) and **Road Rash** (PS3) according to a recent investors conference call. The bad news is that **Army Of Two** has slipped to Fiscal Year '07, which means it could come out any time between April '07 and March '08 – but probably before Xmas '07 in the UK. **Ratchet And Clank** fans will be delighted to learn that Insomniac are entering 'full production' on a fifth game (on PS3) as soon as they've finished **Resistance: Fall Of Man**. Early *Ratchet* footage, set in a Fifth Element style megacity with cars flying everywhere, was shown at E3 2005 – expect more in the new year.

As we speak, Sega are working an **Iron Man** game based on the forthcoming film starring Jon Favreau, while Capcom have a mystery PS3 game to announced, helmed by an unknown western producer. In a similar vein, Sony have signed fledgling studio Media Molecule (the team behind PC cult hit **Rag Doll Kung-Fu**) to make a secret, full-price, new PS3 project billed as 'something very special' by, er, the developers. Hmm.

Finally, David Jaffe (of *God Of War* fame) is working on **Criminal Crackdown**, a downloadable PS3 title which – get this – he's really excited about too. As ever, see you next month.

The Iron game This is Iron Man, star of Sega's new game based on the upcoming move. More soon.

"Pinch girls' arses, chuck eggs at teachers..."

Canis is one of our games of Xmas page 14

PSM3 SHOCKER

Virtua Tennis 3 at full tilt

Buttons? Who needs buttons? Wait, we do...

The Sixaxis pad. It's great. Official. Works like a charm in *Lair* and *MotorStorm*, and we love battering Nazis with it in *Call Of Duty 3*. It works so well, Sega have employed it in *Virtua Tennis 3*. Except they've gone *mental*.

You know about the ability to serve by tilting the pad up then down. That's a good, simple idea. But, as the mystifying diagrams down below 'demonstrate', you can now use the tilt function for *everything*. Move your player about by thrusting forward and back? Lob with a vertical swing? Apply top spin with a *horizontal* swing? What happened to simply pushing buttons? Nothing, actually, you can still do that – and we've been hands-on with *VT3* (in sensible-controls mode) and it's as wonderful as ever. We'll stick with playing the normal way. The PS3 tilt pad madness starts here. Sigh.

The PSM3 Wrong-Righter

EMAIL PSM3 @
Spotted some Bertie Bollax in PSM3? Tell us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Squirting the scent of truth over past issues

DEF JAM 3 STARS ICE T... — WRONG

We wouldn't be so daft as to look at a shot of a man who looks a bit like Ice T and then witter on about him for eight pages without checking first that it was *actually* Ice T, would we? Would we? Oh, we would. Crap. Sorry.

NOT ICE T AT ALL

PSM79 page 24

REMAKE OF TOMB RAIDER 1 — RIGHT

We've been saying for ages that Eidos were busying remaking the first *Tomb Raider* on PSone for PS2, and we were spot on. Yep, *Tomb Raider Anniversary* will be out next year and here's the very first screenshot. Hold us back!

RIGHT AGAIN

PSM79 page 18

MORTAL KOMBAT ARMAGEDDON
KILLING TIME HAS BEGUN
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THE CAPITATION IS TOO QUICK
KREATE A NEW FATALITY
KREATE A FIGHTER
PERSONALISE THE PA'N
SEE SLAYER ON TOUR
PlayStation.2
HAMMER
PlayStation.2
POWERED BY GameSpy
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ON THE DISC
We review *Scarface* on our DVD this month

PSM3 BUYERS GUIDE

PSM3's ten games of Christmas

The year's greatest. Own them or look like a fool

At this time of year our attention turns to one thing – getting the best possible Christmas presents. So allow us to 'present' our ten favourite games of the year so that you can fill your stocking packed with yuletide joy (rather than yuletide log). Hmm. That's enough 'Christmas' for now. And sorry about the snowflakes too. (It's still November, frchrissakes!) Look, if you haven't got these ten games then you're missing out. And don't forget to vote in our reader awards too. Merry Xmas.

1 Canis Canem Edit

"The game has so much to offer in terms of diversity. Immaculately designed, an absolute joy to play through." **PSM81, 93%**

Why you need it Because there's so much to do in Bullworth. Boxing, bike racing, carnival games, keepie-ups, even the classes are fun and you'll actually look forward to the bell ringing at 9am each morning.

Defining moment Doing everything you were too scared to do in school.

2 Kingdom Hearts 2

"It sparkles with quality and plays as beautifully as it looks. The leader of the RPG revival pack." **PSM73, 90%**

Why you need it Because it's a good halfway between a fully-blown RPG and an action game. And it's one of the most colourful, beautiful games on PS2. Even RPG haters will find something to love.

Defining moment Auron from *FFX* and Sora combining to battle Cerberus from Hercules.

3 Hitman: Blood Money

"Focused, fresh and utterly compelling. Delivers some of the finest level design yet seen on PS2." **PSM75, 93%**

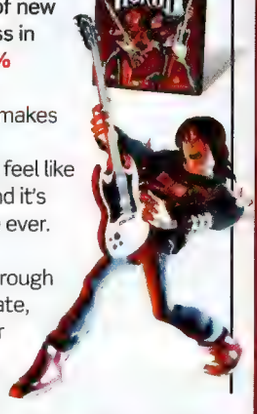
Why you need it Because the freedom is unprecedented. You can play through however you like, only limited by your imagination. And you're rewarded for creative killing.

Defining moment Shooting a glass-bottomed pool from below and watching the people in it topple to their doom on the rocks.

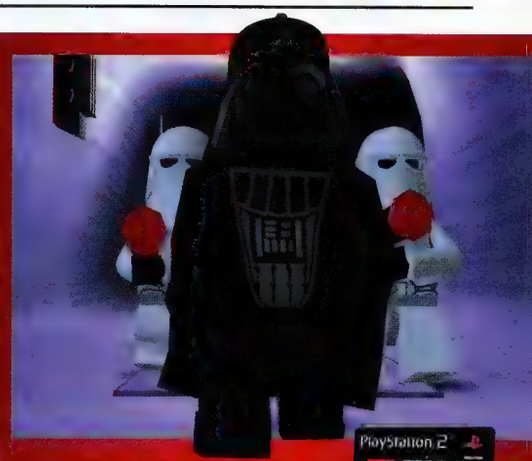
4 Guitar Hero 2

"They've addressed every criticism and packed a load of new stuff in to boot. A masterclass in sequel-making." **PSM82, 92%**

Why you need it Because it makes even the most cack-handed, untalented, tone-deaf of folk feel like they're virtuoso guitarists. And it's the best rhythm action game ever.



Defining moment Playing through Sweet Child O' Mine with a mate, with one of you on lead guitar and the other on bass. Absolutely out of this world.



7 Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy

"A force to be reckoned with. It's cute, it's funny and it's hardcore, but most importantly it's fun." **PSM79, 91%**

Why you need it Because it's the first three Star Wars films rendered entirely in Lego plastic. And it's one of the best co-op games on PS2. Get a mate involved and you enter a whole new realm of enjoyment.

Defining moment Using Free Play mode to go back to the trilogy's key moments playing as evil characters like Darth Vader. The Emperor helping the Ewoks? A TIE fighter destroying the Death Star? Madness.

5 Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence

"One of the best games ever with a swathe of new content including really excellent online options." **PSM78, 93%**

Why you need it Because it's the definitive version of one of PS2's best. The new camera makes it even more playable.

Defining moment Playing as Snake being pursued by six human players with nothing but stealth camo.

6 Shadow Of The Colossus

"One of the most beautiful, heartbreaking, imaginative experiences on PS2." **PSM69, 91%**

Why you need it Because it's like playing a film. The fantasy setting, lush visuals and amazing orchestral soundtrack prove that games can be just as engaging and absorbing as the movies.

Defining moment The fifth colossus. A huge bird soars through the air and the trip through the skies is awesome.

"Some fans found it very difficult to get into"
Final Fantasy XII's producer speaks page 16

8 Pro Evolution Soccer 6

"A slower, more physical simulation of football's highs and lows. Mathematically perfect gameplay." **PSM80, 91%**

Why you need it Because it's the greatest *PES* ever, again. Slower and more physical than *PES5*, but even more satisfying to boot.

Defining moment Scoring a last-minute 30-yarder against a mate. Eat that!

9 OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast

"Pure sunshine gaming. Embrace its beautiful simplicity." **PSM73, 89%**

Why you need it If you want pure arcade thrills and faster-than-gazelles driving action, *OutRun* is unbeatable.

Defining moment Tearing through the ultra-difficult E route, making every checkpoint with a terrifying split-second to spare.

10 Scarface: The World Is Yours

"Swearing, violence, sleaze, '80s music, decadence – it's everything a Scarface game should be." **PSM81, 89%**

Why you need it Montana is a brilliantly charismatic lead, the missions are a thrill and being able to hurl insults at people as you shoot them is a touch of genius.

Defining moment Making your first $1,000,000 drug deal.

Portable The five best PSP games of 2006

Want the very best in PSP gaming? Your collection MUST include this lot

Gitaroo Man Lives!

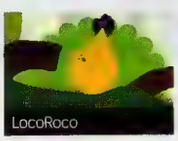
"Challenging, weird and wonderful, this is unlike anything else on PSP, if you can get past the steep difficulty curve." PSM78, 90%

Why you need it
Because the tunes are so good. You'll play each level over and over again, not just to test your skills, but to hear the cracking tunes just that once more.

Lumines 2

"Games like this are what PSP was made for. Hypnotic puzzling that you'll play for ages" PSM82, 92%

Why you need it
Because it's so addictive. Playing *Lumines* is like a weird, hypnotic drug trip where you're trapped in space surrounded by coloured blocks. It's *Tetris* for a new generation.


LocoRoco

"Guide your grinning sphere through colourful worlds. Odd, entertaining and the happiest game ever." PSM77, 93%

Why you need it
Because it's so lovely. The cute singing of the LocoRocos, the spongey soft levels and the innovative tilt controls are all all wonderfully-implemented.

Daxter

"Looks and plays so much like *Jak 2* that it's a bit unnerving. The best platformer we've played on PSP." PSM75, 86%

Why you need it
Because it's a PS2-sized game. The entire city from *Jak 2 is* in there, not to mention loads of new areas. And Daxter's bug gun is genius, letting you float around and zap enemies.

GTA: Vice City Stories

"One of the best games on PSP. The game engine may be showing its age but this is top-drawer entertainment." PSM78, 91%

Why you need it
OK, so the tiny controls and limited viewpoint make the classic *GTA* action murderous to play at times but there's nothing to touch it for story and size on PSP.

We want you! Vote in the PSM3 Reader Awards

Coming up with this list of our ten best Christmas games wasn't easy. And that's why we need your help to compile our proper 'best of 2006' yes, it's the PSM3 Reader Awards! To get involved write or email your chosen games to us. We'll compile the winners next month and give some goodies to a selected at random entry!

Send your nominations to:
PSM3, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth [illegible]

Email your nominations to:
PSM3@futurenet.co.uk Subject line: "Reader [illegible]

The Categories
1) Best PS2 Game Of 2006
2) Best PSP Game of 2006
3) Best Game Publisher of 2006
4) Best Multi-Player Game of 2006
5) Best Character of 2006
6) Disappointment of 2006
7) Best Graphics of 2006
8) Best Game Soundtrack of 2006
9) Gaming Moment of 2006
10) Game You Can't Wait For

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Effectively getting rid of Final Fantasy's famous random battles was a brave move.

PSM3 INTERVIEW

Final Fantasy producer speaks

It's not often you meet a genius but PSM3 did when we met up with *FFXII* producer Akitoshi Kawazu

On the morning of October 25, the UK media descended on the Soho Hotel in the heart of central London for the final leg of the *Final Fantasy XII* press tour. PSM3 took some time out to chat with the producer, Akitoshi Kawazu.

Kawazu-san, can you tell us about your role in *Final Fantasy XII*?
I assumed the producer roll midway through the project and so, at that stage, the direction of the game was going was already decided. So what I was basically responsible for was overseeing the general flow of the project, making sure the morale of the various teams was there and seeing the project through to completion.

When you joined the project, did you have anything you specifically wanted to do in *Final Fantasy XII*? Did you want to take it in a new direction or implement any new features which weren't in any of the previous games?
Well, as producer, I wasn't responsible for a lot of the changes that were made. It was entirely in the hands of the directors. Matsuno-san (who came up with the original concept for *Final Fantasy XII*) had a direction that he wanted to take the game. Ito-san, the Battle Director, and Akiyama-san, the Event Director, were also very involved with the story aspects of the game. Each had things they wanted to do. They were very much of a mind that there

"With ground vehicles, there's more than just flying"
Warhawk page 18

should be no holds barred and that what needed to be changed should be changed and to go for something completely new.

There's a much more political storyline in *Final Fantasy XII* than in previous games. What made this change come about? Do you think it's because gamers are more accustomed to these situations nowadays?
The game takes place in the world of Ivalice, the same setting seen in *Final Fantasy: Tactics* and *Vagrant Story*. Historically those games themselves have always been about the struggle among countries. The various countries in this world play very big roles. This time the team also includes people who were working on *Final Fantasy: Tactics Advance* and for that game the story itself did focus more on the characters and their individual lives versus the world. This time *XII* just naturally evolved into being broader, focusing on the world, and being more political.

Whose idea was it to include a Tyrannosaurus Rex in *Final Fantasy XII*?
One of our team was a fan of Marc Bolan... [Lead singer and founder of the band T-Rex.]

Do you play RPGs at all? What do you like to do in your spare time?
I don't really have a lot of free time but, when I get the chance, I do enjoy playing games. As it is, I don't even have the time to play all the games that our own company makes, much less those from other companies and PC games. I'd like to make more time, though, and feel that I should.

Some of the biggest changes have been to the battle system. Do you think the system will return in *Final Fantasy XIII*?
The concept behind all of *XII*'s design was to have the player walking and exploring and really being in the world. So the battle system really sprang from that desire and that goal. Whether the system is used in future games really depends on what particular concept the developers for *Final Fantasy XIII* or other future titles want to emphasis and make use of.

Do you think the changes have been well-received by the series' fans?
In Japan, the first impression for gamers was that this title was very different from earlier instalments so they found it difficult to get into and get their heads around it. But as they progressed and became more familiar with the system, the reaction changed to become much more positive. It's actually very logical in the way you interact with monsters and the flow of the battles themselves makes it a particularly unique experience.

Do you have a favourite monster, location or a villain in the game?
Yes. I really like the 'other' races.

Like the bunny girls? The Viera?
Yes. I'd have to say my favourite is a Seeq called Jovy. I really like him, he lives in the Nalbina Fortress, I'll tell you that much.

***Final Fantasy* has been around for quite a long time. How hard do you think it is to create a game which still feels original?**
Even for games that aren't a part of a long series, it's very difficult to provide a new experience for the players – although I don't think the length of the series has too much of an impact on that challenge.

Were you surprised that western gamers have fallen in love with the series?
Well with the exception of *Kingdom Hearts*, which is of course half Disney properties, nothing else that we've made has been nearly as successful abroad. We'd really love to know what makes *Final Fantasy* so successful in the West, but we don't know what it is!

So what's next? More *Final Fantasy* or something completely different?
I'm not sure if the next title I work on is going to be a *Final Fantasy*, but I'm working on something. I certainly want to continue working on games but, personally, I don't worry if it's a *Final Fantasy* or something else entirely.

Kawazu Biography

The work of the man behind *Final Fantasy*

Akitoshi Kawazu, Executive Producer, FFXII
Kawazu is famous for being one of the founders of Square's legendary franchise and worked on *Final Fantasy I* and *II* for the NES. Kawazu-san also created the *SaGa* series and – as Executive Producer – is currently working on *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers* for Wii and *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates* for DS. He is also working with Motomu Toriyama, the director of *Final Fantasy XIII*, on the tie-in game *Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings* for DS.

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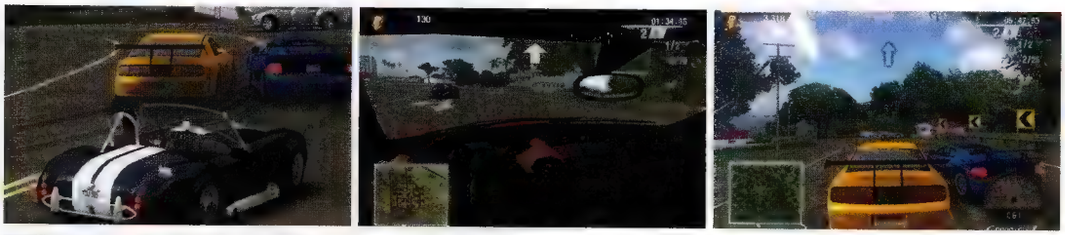
The last minute shots of big importance

The freshest pics, squeezed in as we go to press



PS2 Test Drive Unlimited Top PC racer skids onto PS2

Details Pub Atari | **Dev** Melbourne House | **Genre** Racing

Lowdown Wheel-spinning around lush Hawaiian roads is 'the thing' in *Test Drive: Unlimited*. This free-roaming online racer allows you to buy new clothes, cars and performance parts, then tear around 1600km of tarmac. With Mercedes, Aston Martins and Lamborghinis available to drive and an option to create your own unique challenges, we're pondering as to how this can possibly be as good as it was on 360 recently. We'll bring you a full review soon.

ETA February 2007

PS2 Arthur And The Invisibles The 12,145th children's film tie-in

Details Pub Atari | **Dev** Entranges Libellules | **Genre** Adventure

Lowdown In short, Arthur finds the Land of the Invisibles in his back garden – as you do – and sets off on a journey to save the world from destruction. Playing as Arthur and his mates Selenia and Bétaméche, you'll be combining their skills to overcome puzzles. Quelle surprise. It all seems a little kiddified, but it plays solidly enough – and it's got the voices of Madonna and Snoop Dogg too. Something to look forward to there. Possibly.

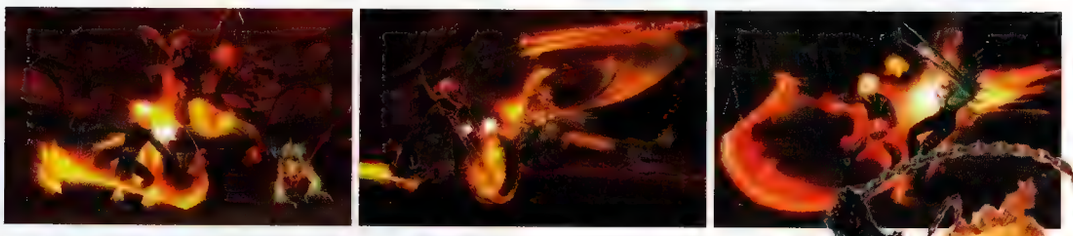
ETA January 2007

PS3 Warhawk Now with added on-foot action

Details Pub Sony | **Dev** Incog Inc | **Genre** Action

Lowdown Early indications suggested that this remake of the PSone game was going to be all about flying with the tilt-pad, but it turns out to have rather more to offer than that, including ground vehicles and team commands. Meanwhile, the frantic online multi-player modes will have you blowing away the opposition in an effort to scramble up the leaderboard. And now we've had a longer play with the Sixaxis pad, we're confident that the flying bits should be superb. More soon.

ETA March 2007



PS2 Ghost Rider Who gave a skeleton a bike license?

Details Pub 2K Games | **Dev** Climax | **Genre** Action

Lowdown This license from the comic (and upcoming movie) sees you play as Ghost Rider, a flame-skulled motorcyclist that can whip up enemies with his hellfire chain and then blast them to bits with his hellfire shotgun – so expect gameplay much like *Devil May Cry*. There's also a selection of bike riding bits where you get to fly over jumps and skim across water like a pebble. More next month, when we'll give you more than just the bare bones of information...

ETA February 2007

The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy

Micro-transactions? Take *all* my cash!

Ever since Sony announced their plans for 'micro-transactions' – paying to download extra bits of a game – I've been a happy, happy man. Why, only a stone-age fool would expect to get an entire game for £50 – forking out even more cash for all those extras is the future!

Look at *Gran Turismo HD*, for instance. I don't want to have to actually *play* the thing properly to earn all those cars – not when I can fork out loads of cash and get the best motors available with no effort. Then I can cream all those paupers online who won't pay for a complete game after spending a mere £425 on a PS3 and 50 quid on *GT HD* itself. Tightwads.

Instant satisfaction

Yes, as soon as we get a game, we'll have access to everything we've previously had to spend hours unlocking. In RPGs, I can instantly acquire The Sword Of Ultimate Beheading, in FPSs I can buy the 'One Shot Kills An Entire Frikkin' Army' Gun Of Ludicrous Slaughter and perhaps in *Tomb Raider* I can get Lara the 'Teeny Bikini Of Near-Invisibility'. Yes, no more need we work for these things – we can just buy them instantly. OK, we might end up getting bored of our games quicker than we otherwise would – but we can just buy more. After all, it's only money!

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Pay to play? What do you think of Sony's plans?

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Cover Game

PS3

Pub Activision | **Dev** Treyarch
Price $40 | **Release** Out now (US)
Multi-player 1-24

"Defines the benchmark for what a next-gen game must deliver"

PSM3 BUY IT

Looks can kill Get in the thick of the action or take cover and watch your AI buddies at work.

Call Of Duty 3

Our first ever PlayStation 3 review sets the standard

IMPORT

KNOW IT NOW

- Stunning next-gen graphics throughout? ☑
- Innovative use of the Sixaxis pad? ☑
- Superb voice acting and music? ☑
- Car-pimping and keeping it gangsta? ☒

Here it is. The very first PSM3 PS3 game review. This is what we've been waiting all these years for. We're about to have all our questions answered: Will PS3 deliver? Is all that shiny, expensive hardware just for show? Can a PS3 game really be *that different* to the trusty, much-loved current gen? Well, the answer to these questions is – if *Call of Duty 3* on PS3 is anything to go by – a resounding 'YES'. Perhaps more than any other PS3 game yet unveiled, *Call of Duty 3* defines the new benchmark for what a next-gen game must deliver. It's not just about hi-res graphics. It's not just about flashy use of the Sixaxis tilt-sensitive pad. And it's not about a pointless quest to fill up 50Gb of a Blu-ray disc. Turns out the next-gen is about good old fashioned gameplay and level design after all.

Not just a pretty face

Don't get us wrong. *Call of Duty 3* on PS3 looks frikkin' amazing. You've never seen water effects like it. The way the camera pulls focus as you look down the barrel of

Beyond the Call of Duty

Despite being one of the first PS3 games *COD3* already shows off a wealth of tricks that will become staples in future games. Watch out for amazing smoke effects where shafts of light illuminate the particles in the air, bodies fall and slump like you've just pulled the life right out of them and explosions send debris and people ricochetting around the scenery.

Inside story Buildings have exteriors [illegible] Make your way inside, [illegible] the holes.

Hat's my boy [illegible] pursuit of [illegible] picking out enemies from gone get [illegible] be tricky. Our tip is to aim for the light glinting off [illegible] shiny helmets

Your turn to drive [illegible] which only [illegible]

your gun will amaze. And wait until you see rain bouncing off the shiny wet uniform of the German trying to strangle you. You'll know you're playing PlayStation 3 not because of any hype or brand-loyal brainwashing, but because you can see the difference on the screen, and, with the incredible use of the Sixaxis pad, you can feel it too.

Call of Duty 3 is a great game. So great it kicks ass on any format. Check out why this is the ultimate war game in our exclusive review of the PS2 version over on page 64. The PS3 game simply takes the self-same missions and level designs and polishes them until they shine with next-gen greatness. Besides the graphics the two games are identical. Can't wait until PS3 hits in March 2007? Treat

Feel the texture Part of PS3's armoury is its ability to pack incredible detail into its textures. Detail that would have taken hundreds of polygons previously can now be created at a stroke.

Girl weekly The creases are part of a real uniform scanned for the game. Using part of the texture means more realism and less polys.

Call Of Duty 3

"The game throws enemies at you - and these guys are *smart*"

Glow Lighting like this isn't just a background. Light bounces of shiny wet surfaces and picks out texture details with shadows.

Explosions Stare deep into an explosion and you can see multiple layers of glow, particles and dust clouds.

Mash it up Watch out for flying stick grenades. Referred to as 'potato mashers' by your comrades, you can see them wheeling through the air towards you.

Cover to cover

What you can't see in these screens is the intelligent way the game throws enemies at you. Sure there are plenty of moments where you're presented with a wide vista of delicious cannon fodder, but get pinned down by a sniper or come across an entrenched squad of enemies and you'll be wishing for the dumbass robots you've fought in every other game. These guys are *tough*.

"Get pinned down by a sniper or entrenched squad of enemies"

Open season Assuming a squat pose gives the enemy less to aim at but this guy is clearly too far in the open. Take cover, mate. Quick.

Cover ranger Picking your way from cover to cover is the only way to advance. Pick your moment... then run!

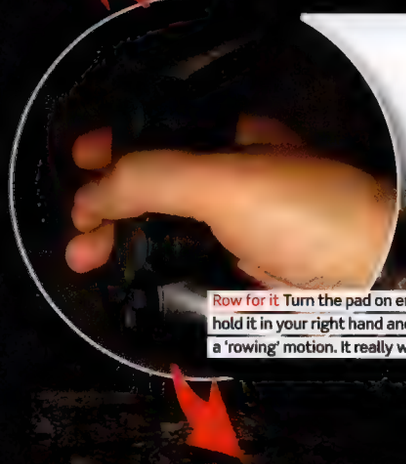
Handy tip This simple compass shows you all you need to know - where you're going, where your mates are... and where they are.

Cover Game

PS3

Row your boat

On other formats, *COD3*'s new Battle Actions take the form of stick swirls or rhythmic button pumping. On PS3 however you wave your new, motion-sensitive Sixaxis joypad around. After battling through the town you have to cross a river under enemy fire. The only way to get over is to actually *row* across.



Row for it Turn the pad on end, hold it in your right hand and make a 'rowing' motion. It really works.

Screw you Hit the buttons to go to the next stage of the process, hold the pad flat and rotate it around to 'screw'.

Insert bomb here

Objects you must interact with are picked out on your compass first, then glow yellow once you're up close. Tilt the pad to insert the fuse then spin it around to screw it in.

Call Of Duty 3

"Want to put your PS3 to the test? Make sure *COD3* is part of your artillery"

Grapple turnover

Get up close and personal in *COD3*. Melee attacks are more violent than ever on PS3 – you literally have to shake the Bosh off when they leap on you. Keep the pad shaking for long enough and you'll see them weaken before falling backwards (or to their doom).

Face to face Hold the pad upright and tilt it left and right. These bits go on for ages so you'll be knackered at the end.

Shake it, baby Be sure to hold the pad as shown in the picture. Now twist for your life.

Twitch gaming Brilliant bit, this. Rather than have a button for melee face-bash you can just jerk the pad at 'em. Now that's cool.

yourself to the PS2 game. But mark our words. Once you see the PS3 game in action you'll never go back.

But despite all that PS3 power the only additions the new machine offers above the PS2 game are shinier, sharper graphics and the genius use of the pad. PS3 is off to a great start but we think that it can do even better. That said, want to put your PS3 to the test in March? Make sure *COD3* is part of your artillery. **Daniel Griffiths**

PSM3 Verdict

***Call Of Duty 3* contains...**

Superlative graphics | Immersive action
Massive levels | Ultimate war experience

Overall The next-gen starts here. Great looks gel with genius game design. Welcome PS3.

89

PS3

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Bethesda
Players 1 | **Genre** RPG
FYI The biggest RPG known to man

ON THE DISC
See the first look of *Oblivion*
Play on next month's disc

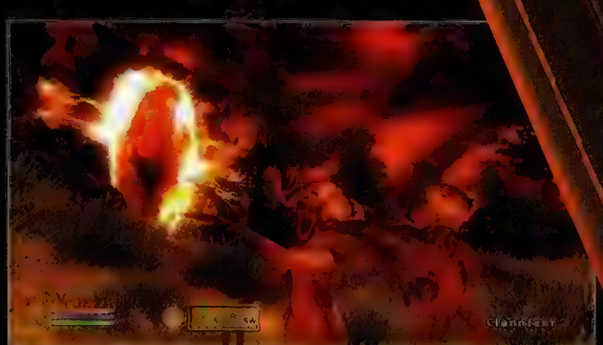
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion

Five reasons to spend 500 hours in *Oblivion*

Steven Bailey

1 Go to hell

Oblivion Gates are tearing up the land – the only way to close these hellish portals is to enter them, and retrieve a well-protected stone. And the Oblivion Plane is quite literally *hellish*...



2 Every dungeon is a mini-adventure

Brimming with magical treasures to steal, the Ayleid Shrines – see the shots above – are the most atmospheric and beautiful of *Oblivion*'s dungeon-type locations, next to its many caves, mines and forts. Rich pools of mystical blue light and deep recesses of shadow make exploring an Ayleid Shrine a haunting experience, especially if you favour stealth. That way, you'll be able to get the drop on whoever's patrolling the place, as well as the deadly anti-burglary traps that fill its corridors.

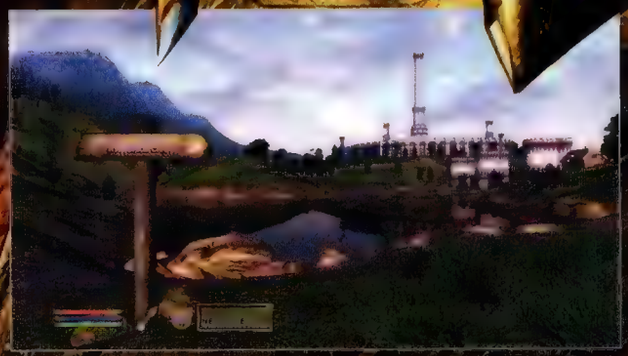
3 Does D&D make you S&A&D?

Not too keen on games where you wield weapons called 'The Obelisk of Piercing' (dagger) or 'The Stave of Flametongue Vapours' (firey stick)? After exploring *Oblivion*, you'll soon find out how to create your own spells and enchanted items, as well as name them in the process. So a close range spell such as 'The Pooey Handshake' (-50 pts personality, on touch) is yours, if you want it.

Apparel
Boots of the Crusader 300 9 1 40
Cuirass of the Crusader 7050 30 5 80
Gauntlets of the Crusader 1350 6 2 100
Greaves of the Crusader 800 18 3 100
Helm of the Crusader 2800 0 2 84
Shield of the Crusader 4100 12 7 100
242/285 25 133
NW
Unequip
Drop
Hotkey
Move/Tab

4 Being outside *feels* like being outside

The major blot on the landscapes of the 360 version was the horribly low-res textures of distant land. Not so on PS3, meaning that sunrises will now feel 20% more awe-inspiring.



5 Ignore the main quest, if you want...

And just explore. Go on, pick a direction and just go for it, perhaps take a hike through the humungous and breathtakingly detailed forests. Four hours later, who knows where you'll be?

PSM3 Reckons

The fattest RPG to ever hit a console is about to shine most brightly on PlayStation 3. You couldn't *ever* be ready for its girth.

ETA MAY 2007

Pub EA | **Dev** EA
Players 1-2 | **Genre** Sports
FYI The ultimate next-gen boxing sim

ON THE DISC
See more of *Fight Night* on the PSM3 DVD

Gurn your stripes Real-time fatigue and facial damage make this look amazing.

Fight Night Round 3

EA knock out amazing new features for PS3

Nathan Irvine

Great news, people. Not only will EA's *Fight Night Round 3* be available from PS3' UK launch in March, but EA have spent the delay time polishing up the look and feel of its superb scrapper and adding loads of PS3 exclusives (so you can forget all about that other next-gen version).

EA are preparing to give a debut to their Get In The Ring mode. This is a first-person view in which you'll be able to jump into the skin of your chosen boxer and view the fight through their eyes, bobbing and weaving away from knockout-inducing blows.

This was test-driven in the PS2 version but you could only defend yourself - now you'll be able to answer back with a few tidy whacks of your own as you duke it out in FPB (First Person Boxing). There's also a curious split-screen multi-player, which lets both players fight this way, with all the usual big hits (stun punch, flash KO and haymaker) to rock your opponent with. And, thankfully, you'll be able to go toe-to-toe over the net as well, as online play has been confirmed. Come on then, we'll take you all on.

On top of all that, *Fight Night Round 3* will feature streaming media from the ESPN sports desk. This means that between bouts you'll be able check out all the latest footage, results and radio stations of *all* ESPN's covered sports - not just the boxing, then. It'll be like The Big Fight Live on your PS3.

Get in the ring

EA just can't resist ramming a new feature down our throats and this time around it's Get In The Ring mode. As you can see from the shots, you'll be placed behind the eyes and fists of your chosen boxer. Get caught with a clean hit and the screen will rock dramatically, so you'd better answer back with a few blows of your own.

Attention to details
The least interesting bit of a boxer, yes, but the elbow dimples are so realistic. Just like the rest of their bodies, which compare well to *our* physiques. [cough]

Power punching
Such is the brutality of *Fight Night Round 3*, that if one clean punch lands squarely in your opponent's mush, they'll be eating canvas like a hungry painter.

Breathing deep
Rather than relying on HUDs to determine when your opponent is about to deck it, you need to watch their breathing and facial expressions to tell if they're tired.

PSM3 Reckons

It looks amazing and we're looking forward to battling for the online crown. *Fight Night* PS3 will be more solid and visceral than ever.

ETA MAR 2007

PS3

Pub Rockstar | **Dev** Team Bondi
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI The detective genre comes to PS3

ON THE DISC
See this very trailer on the disc this issue

01 The detectives cruise through the sepia-lit night.

02 "Hey, wait... that's our man! Get him!"

LA Noire

Rockstar introduce PS3 to the, erm, private dick-'em-up...

David Cook

L.A Noire, Rockstar's film noir-inspired detective mystery, has the sort of trailer that poses far more questions than it answers. For a start, we're told that it's a game in which you solve "a series of gruesome murders", but the movie we've seen suggests that *you're* responsible for at least one of them – albeit the murder of someone who appears to be a murderer himself.

The trailer opens on two LAPD detectives in their car, talking about their plans to crack a recent murder case (and bitching about the homicide department) when they almost run over a man they recognise at a crossing – the murderer? A handy coincidence, if so. Anyway, one of the detectives gives chase on foot, pelting after him through the dark, claustrophobic streets and alleyways (and a rather nice looking restaurant) and up a fire escape before – as in all good cop flicks – there's a rooftop showdown. The bad guy tries to brain the detective with a metal bar, fails, and then the two get involved in a brawl – culminating in the lawman shoving the crim off the building to his death. The first cop arrives on the scene, bellowing "nothing to see here!" and stares up at the rooftop, from where his partner stares back down at him.

Unsolved mysteries

And that's the trailer but, as we said, it leaves questions. Was that the actual murderer thrown off the roof? Can the detectives get away with offing

07 Cop B stares up at his comrade. What's next? Who knows.

08 One pavement pancake – hold the lemon juice.

03 Cue a chase through dimly-lit streets...

04 ...down an even darker alley and up a fire escape.

suspects? *LA Noire* is the work of Brendan McNamara, one of the brains behind *The Getaway*, so have lessons been learned from that game? But, most importantly, how does the *LA Noire* actually play? If we're going to be detectives, we'd hope for – and this is something we've not really seen from Rockstar before – some thoughtful puzzles, mystery-solving and clue-cracking. Oh, and some brutal violence and perhaps an interrogation minigame where you get to slap suspects around. Ideally with baseball bats. The trailer drips with atmosphere and if the game makes good use of its excellent setting, this ought to be worth keeping a (private) eye on.

PSM3 Reckons

LA Noire certainly looks the part so far, and the idea's great. Let's just hope the game lives up to its premise. More news soon.

05 The lawman opens the door onto the rooftop...

07 A fight! Chummy's getting a little close to the edge...

06 The bad man's waiting. It's a trap! Look out!

PS3

Pub Vivendi | **Dev** Monolith
Players 1-32 | **Genre** FPS
FYI An FPS with a Ring-inspired horror feel

ON THE DISC
There's more on *F.E.A.R.* on the disc next month

F.E.A.R.

Face your fears in PS3's psychic first-person shooter

Andy Kelly

The First Encounter Assault Recon team are paranormal investigators with a difference. They don't mince around haunted English manors with Geiger counters (step forwards Derek Acorah) they equip themselves with guns and grenades and go toe-to-toe with the unknown. In *F.E.A.R.* you play as an unnamed soldier tasked with hunting down and killing Paxton Fettel, a lunatic controlling an army of evil clones with his mind. What? Oh, yes, it *is* nonsense, but luckily the plot doesn't matter – *F.E.A.R.*'s genius lies with its physics-heavy combat.

For the most part it's traditional first-person shooting, but the sheer destructibility of the environments makes things a lot more interesting. Enter slow-mo mode and every bullet leaves a swirling trail, wood shatters and splinters, steam spews from pipes and blood arcs through the air. If you have a shotgun equipped you can send enemies tumbling backwards, their ragdoll limbs bending and flailing in a grotesque dance of death. Then you leave slow-mo mode and it becomes 'just another' FPS again.

The game's other gimmick is that it's a horror game. But don't expect to be scared like you were in *Silent Hill* – it's a very American type of horror, more along the lines of recent remakes like The Grudge rather than the creepy psychological chills of The Shining and so on. There are bleeding walls, objects moving of their own accord and a little girl with long black hair and bleeding eyes... Ah, just another day at the paranormal office.

TELLING THE STORY

Scene and not heard

Or how *F.E.A.R.* ditches cut-scenes in favour of in-game drama

Happy talk As in *Half-Life*, characters talk directly to the camera. The game's hero never speaks, so conversations are entirely one-sided. This helps draw you into the drama as it unfolds.

Shock and awe Scary moments also occur in real-time before your very eyes, giving you the freedom to move around. This makes them a lot more dynamic than a boring old cut-scene.

Enemy of the state Enemies are trained soldiers, so they'll work in teams to hunt you down. Time to get a little tactical.

F.E.A.R factor

Most of the game takes place in either a grey-tinged office block, a brown-coloured warehouse or a dark street. But it suits the mood, lends the game a modern, realistic feel and we'll admit feeling unnerved creeping through the opening crawl in an abandoned building. Your character has flashes of ghostly apparitions, scary little girls and all kinds of horrible stuff. Play it with the lights out for optimum effect.

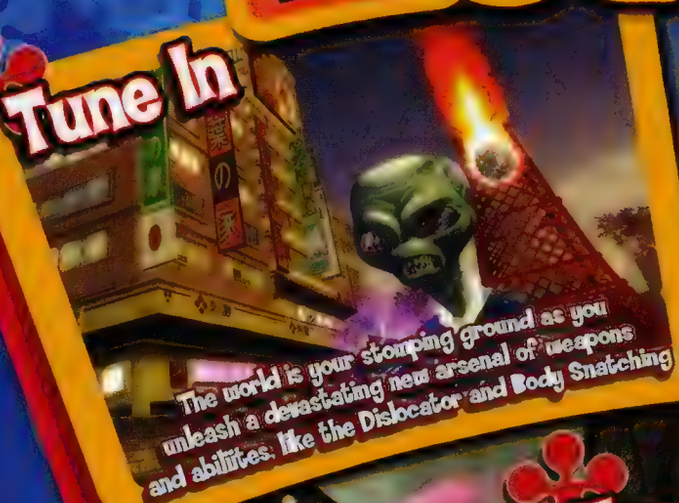
PSM3 Reckons

It's not as scary as it thinks it is, but the brutal combat and outrageous physics abuse make it worth your attention. Should be good.

ETA MAR 2007

Make War, Not Love!™

Tune In



The world is your stomping ground as you unleash a devastating new arsenal of weapons and abilities. like the Dislocator and Body Snatching

Turn On

Drop into the Swinging 60's and explore 5 huge open world environments around the globe. from Bay City to Tunguska

Team Up

Play with a friend and wreak havoc as you vaporise the human race together

15

PlayStation.2

XBOX

OUT OCTOBER 20TH

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DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2
SEQUEL TO THE SMASH HIT OF 2005
PANDEMIC
THQ
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Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your Space

Start

48 Letters
Choice cuts from the PSM3 mail sack.

50 Robo-Mind
The robot is back and he's angrier than ever.

51 MySpace
Our eight favourite readers this month.

52 Reader Critic
Disagree with our scores? You try it!

53 YouTube
The best videogamer videos around.

54 Challenge
Monthly challenges for hardcore gamers.

55 I Can Do This!
Your top gaming feats exposed.

55 Beat The Team
Can you beat Dan D and Nathan online?

PSM3 Wants You!

Post PSM3, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Star letter wins the writer a game

Email PSM3@futurenet.co.uk

Text 87103 and start your message PSM3

MySpace & the PSM3 blog Go to myspace.com/psm3 or check out psm3mag.com

Online Play the team at online games and win big

Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

War of the worlds

Why the hell are people complaining so much about the European PS3 delay? Why can't those that are ignorant see the blissful side of this news? Think about it – PS3 is probably gonna launch at near £425 and games will likely be a further £50, so you can estimate you'll be paying out nearly £550-600 come launch day. Most people out there probably can't afford a PS3 in November launch and will see the extra months as a way to save up those precious pounds.

I must admit that I own an Xbox 360 (the shame, I know), although it could be seen as a stepping stone for your immersion into next-gen games. The level of detail on the 360 games is truly astounding, the online features for most are definitely ace, and thinking that PS3 will be nearly twice as powerful than that is almost too good to believe. If Sony get its online system spot on (unlike the shameful PS2 online features) then it will definitely be better than the 360. It is only the online stuff that keeps 360 top of some people's minds.

Sony know what they're doing and although waging war on both the 360 and Wii will be challenging, I fully back Sony to be the winner of the next-gen console war. Although saying that, is the 360 even a next-gen console? It only has slightly improved graphics and a new Live service – and the Wii is not even half as powerful as the 360. So, does Sony actually have any competition in the next-gen war? Seems not.
Rich, email

LETTER

You lot have been going on about this so-called 'console war' for ages, so we thought we'd print a letter about it. We like your upbeat Sony patriotism, Rich, but to be honest it doesn't matter too much what the other consoles do (although remember, some of us own 360s and others have expressed interest in getting a Wii) – we love PS3 and we know it's going to be absolutely brilliant when it comes out. There's nothing wrong with the other machines, but PS3 will always be number one in our hearts. Romantic, eh?

> **"Why are people complaining so much?"**

Console yourself Many people will buy all three consoles. Not all at once though. Unless they're insane or have an obscenely large credit limit. Or earn as much as Dan G.

Drive of your life

If *GT HD* is online, then selling cars means that the person willing to spend extra money on the game is likely to have the better (ie: faster) car. And even then, when you see a Ferrari (for instance), it won't represent that person being any better at the game than you (and therefore you lose the incentive to advance in the game to unlock better cars), just that they're willing to spend more money than you. If it's not online, WHAT'S THE POINT!?! Why would you spend extra money to buy a car that no one's gonna see? Unless you've got the USB printer and like to print off pics of your collection, in which case you're already beyond help.
Freshmetal, blog

Car-ma £50 to you chief. OK, £25... £10 and a kiss? Wait come back!

"You What?"

Thanks for writing in, Paul.

Does Andy want a date?
Alabama, Myspace
He says he's flattered, but that he has to decline. He doesn't want to "date a reader". Prima donna. Hey, do you lot ever buy games? You must get sent loads by Sony because you review and preview them all.
Ross, email
We get sent special review discs, but we can't play them at home, which means we either beg and plead for a free copy or we go

Devil's advocate
o psm2 i have got all *DMC* game\\\'s on ps2 exept the new onelis it eny good **Anon**
You mean *DMC3*? Yes, it's great. Mind you, it's a *hard* game\\\ (Honestly, what's with *that*?)

The score
whats up with your *GTA: SA* score?? its nowhere near good as 99% **Dav**
We think it is. And, be honest, can you think of a better game on PS2?

Turncoat
what's the point of PS3? most of the games are coming out on xbox 360 and thats out already so i don't have to wait for Ps3!!! **Anon**
What about *Final Fantasy XIII*? And *Devil May Cry 4*? Or *MotorStorm*? *Resistance*? *Ridge Racer 7*? Yes, exactly. Now shush.

'Toon army
Why arent there more games based on anime TV shows like Naruto? there are a few, such as *Dragon Ball Z*, but they aren't all that good. **Anon**
You should go to Japan. There are literally hundreds of PS2 games based on obscure anime that never make it to these shores. But we do know that a Naruto game is coming out here soon

Speak up!
Your commentaries are excellent, but you are a bit quiet **Bob**
That's because we record them in a secret bunker under the sea. We'll speak up a bit.

Text us Send to 87103 and start your message with 'PSM3'.

We're sure Sony and Polyphony have thought about this, and they'll have some kind of solution to it. We're not exactly *pleased* with the news that a lot of the content has to be downloaded, but they will make sure it doesn't ruin the game experience.

Snake charmer

I wanna see Baby Snake in *MGS5*. You could have a baby helicopter which would carry him around and they'd get up to all manner of crazy mischief! Oh what hilarity would ensue! Yes, I am convinced – this is one idea I want to see brought to life by old Robo-Koj.
Rob, MySpace

We'd be surprised if Koj hadn't thought of this already to be honest.

Dog eat dog We were expecting *Dogs* to be a poor tie-in, but it was actually a surprisingly good action/crime caper.

This got us thinking though – where could the *MGS* series go next? Space? The stone age? Butlins?

Dog will hunt

I don't think you were particularly fair to *Reservoir Dogs*. I thought the gameplay had its issues, sure, but overall the choice between slaying every law enforcement officer with shotgun rounds or pummelling a hostage's head with the butt of your pistol to ensure the authorities dropped their weapons and lined up against the wall, ripe for you to execute them, was quite a lot of fun. Sure, its a rental rather than a buy, but I had a ball.
Jim, MySpace

Fair? We gave it 74%! We really enjoyed it and our review was massively praising. If a game that scores in the 70s then its really good. If 50 is average then 70 is way above average. Got it? We're glad you enjoyed *Reservoir Dogs* though. It got a bad rap from a lot of other magazines, but we thought it was accomplished and enjoyable, if flawed.

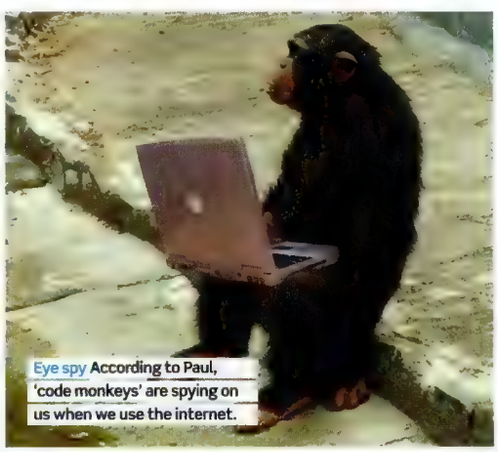
Evil empire

Do you ever get the feeling you're being watched? And I don't just mean by code monkeys on the internet. I mean by game developers. You see, when a big developer like EA launches a new game it receives massive hype, but when a a smaller company release a game it gets absolutely no hype or a mention anywhere. Big companies are like vultures waiting to feed on a carcass – in this case is the customer. And instead of trying to eat them, they sell games instead. Small companies aren't as hungry and their games are better quality, and not simply made by people trying to get rich through modern day culture. Basically, small companies are the good guys and the big ones are the baddies.
Paul, Chester

This is either the best letter we've ever received or the worst. When we read it we were imaginging you as one of those nutters who stand in the middle of a busy street with a microphone preaching. But you have a point – the best games are often the more obscure, original ones. But the truth is that commercially-focused titles will sell more. There are more people out there who like modding fast cars than they do running around a Japanese painting pretending to be a white wolf, for example. Shame.

Waiting line

What the hell's going on with PS3? I


Eye spy According to Paul, 'code monkeys' are spying on us when we use the internet.

Best of the Blog

Visit PSM3MAG.COM and have your say

"Yes, I do like pop music – in vast quantities!"
Posted by: Does My Bum Look Big In This?

"I still haven't got my PS2 online, but I'm rubbish at *PES* so I'd get slaughtered anyway."
Posted by: Liam

"I'd still rather a 20gb PS3."
Posted by: Chris W

Best of the Rest

Meanwhile, Pete C shares his game idea with the blog, "*Guitarcar* should be a racing game where you have to do an '80s-style big hair solo to win. Bend those strings, baby." Yes. Elsewhere, Simon Blundell laments his job: "I work somewhere not to dissimilar from the box factory in The Simpsons. Where did I go wrong in life?!" Cheer up, mate. It could be worse. You could be *dead*.

Blog We post every day. Go to psm3mag.com for free PSM3.

and buy our own from a shop. A *shop*!
I was playing *Siren 2* and I absolutely cacked myself when that face appears in that girl's stomach. **Jep, London**
Yeah, we remember that bit. It's horrible. <shudder>

I sniped The End repeatedly in the head while he was in the chair... and we still fought in the jungle afterwards! Bloody armoured bald head!
Emily, Myspace
It can be a bit hit and miss this bit (no pun intended), but we'd rather fight him in the jungle anyway. It's what a true soldier would do. Probably.

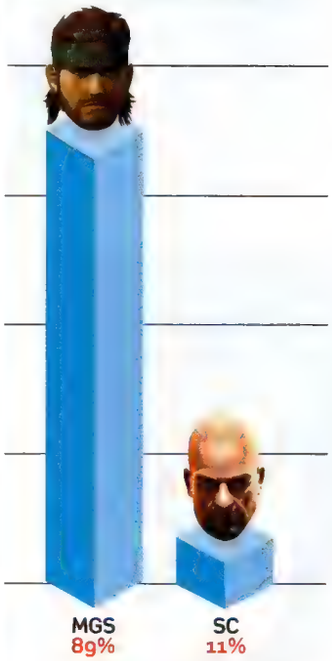
I play *Call Of Duty* online. It seems to be dominated by middle aged Americans who are all loads better than me :(
alldreamsfalldown, Myspace
They carry guns all the time which explains their skills. Ask them to explain why they love guns then shoot them in the knees while they're talking.

Your Space

Poll Position

We ask. You Answer

This Month What's the best stealth series on PlayStation?



Next Month Best fighter: *Tekken*, *Virtua Fighter* or *Soul Calibur*?

MySpace Cast your vote at http://www.myspace.com/psm3

can't wait until March! This is crap. I'm only 15 and most of the money I have is spent on music and 'special' magazines, so I decided to pool my birthday and Christmas money to get a shiny 60gb PS3. But if it doesn't come out until March I won't get any presents for three months after Christmas. Aargh.

Andrew Haddon, Coventry

P.S. – How old is Andy? He seems to get younger every issue.

Yes, yes. We know the delay is bad news and we know that a lot of people will be disappointed come Christmas, but it's happened and there's nothing we can do to change Sony's mind. Just keep thinking about the brilliant launch line-up we'll have in the UK as a result. That's what we do. All day. And night [sob]. As for Andy, he doesn't have an age - he gets older and younger each morning as a result of gamma ray experiments conducted on him while he was in 'Nam. Poor guy.

Apocalypse now

The way the world is going these days, what with terrorists and stuff, im going to just lock myself in a bunker with a generator and a PlayStation 3 and never leave.

Chris Sullivan, Manchester

Good plan, but that's pretty drastic. You can't beat a bit of two-player PES y'know. And with PS3's online features you'd be really missing out. And everyone knows that *Singstar* is crap by yourself. In a bunker. At the end of the world.

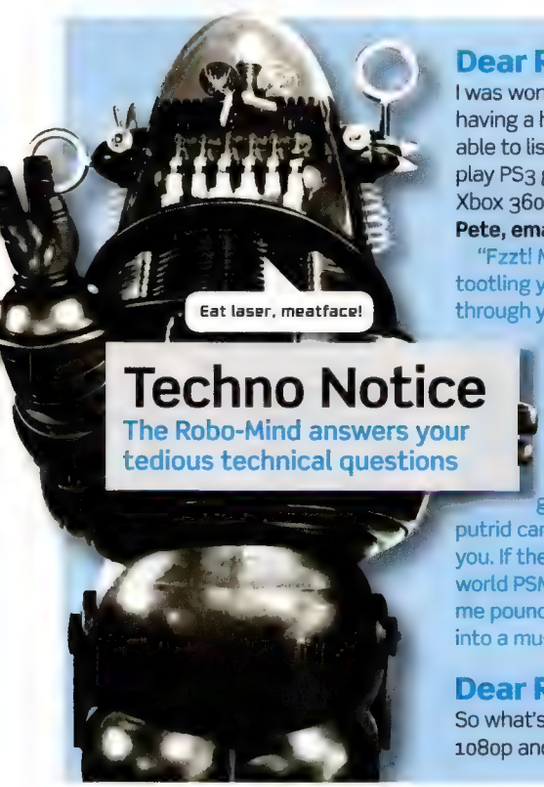
Keep the faith

I think I'm losing my interest in games, which is making me sad. Back in the day I used to get really absorbed into games like *Final Fantasy 7* and *Ridge Racer Type 4* on PSone. But these days games feel a lot shorter and don't have much staying power, except for obvious ones like *GTA* and the like. Am I alone or is it just me? Maybe I've grown out of games altogether. I don't get as much time to play them now that I have a job, booo!

Raspy, email

Good point about a lot of modern games being short and throwaway, but we're still hooked, even though we have jobs and girlfriends and stuff. Everyone has their 'off' periods when there doesn't seem to be anything to play, but it'll pass, especially with PS3 and a bundle of top drawer PS2 games heading our way. 'Am I alone?' and 'is it just me?' mean exactly the same thing, by the way. Are we cheering you up yet? No, thought not.

End days Chris Sullivan is preparing for the end of the world by locking himself in a bunker with a PS3.



Techno Notice

The Robo-Mind answers your tedious technical questions

Dear Robo-Mind

I was wondering, what with PS3 having a hard-drive and all, if I'd be able to listen to my own music while I play PS3 games? You can do it on Xbox 360, so I'm told.

Pete, email

"Fzzt! Music? Oh, that infernal tootling you wretched organics ingest through your ear pipes and 'wriggle' to. Idiots. Well, you will be able to rip CDs and listen to them through PS3's front end, but whether or not you can listen to them during play will be on a game by game basis. Now get your putrid carcass out of my sight. I *loathe* you. If there were any justice in this world PSM3 would unleash me and let me pound your ridiculous meaty face into a mushy paste. Rrrraaazzzzt."

Dear Robo-Mind

So what's the difference between 1080p and 720p on HD tellies? Will I even be able to see the difference? I certainly don't want to pay extra if it'll look almost the same on a cheaper 720 model.

Rory Seggs, email

"Ack! If you could see the world through my 1080p ocular nodes you wouldn't ask such a foolish question. OK, so the difference isn't quite as severe as going from non-HD to HD, but depending on the size of your telly, there will be a difference. Anything approaching 40 inches will benefit most from having 1080p support. So pay up, fleshpod."

Dear Robo-Mind

I was fiddling about with some PSP homebrew stuff ages ago and I seem to have messed up my system settings or something. The PSP won't switch on anymore and it's basically useless. What can I do about it?

Joe Miller, email

"Bwahahahaha! Zzzt... bwahahah! Finally, a chance to use my 'gloating, hateful laugh' emotion add-on. You insipid, pointless humanoid. What you've done is you've 'bricked' your PSP. That means, to all intents and purposes, that you've broken it by messing around with its system. Congratulations! You're an idiot! I hope this mishap is the beginning of the end for humanity. Bye!"

Email us Got a question? Email it to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject 'Robo'.

Extra life

I've got issues with a lot of games these days and their so-called 'bonus content'. OK, so I appreciate that the developers have taken the time to add in some rewards, but most of the time they're just poor. For example *Mortal Kombat* on PS2. A lot of the unlockables in the Krypt are just concept art. Some people might be interested in how a game was designed, but I'm not really and a lot of others probably feel the same. Same goes for trailers for other games, character models, music and so on. The best bonuses are whole new levels and characters that increase the lifespan of the game. Do you agree with me?

Rick Mews, Nottingham

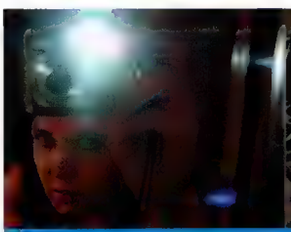
We know exactly what you mean. There's nothing worse than being told you've unlocked 'extra content!' then discovering that it's a pic of the developer's nan. *Grand Theft Auto* did it well – collecting things and completing side-missions gives you new abilities, weapons and vehicles that actually make a difference in-game. More developers should follow suit and lay off the old 'concept art' boyocks. *God Of War*'s extras are an excellent example – some of the 'making of' videos are massively interesting. More like this, please.

Fools gold Bonus content in games varies, but we've always been suckers for ridiculous costumes – like this from *God Of War*. Look! He's a cow! Moooooo! A ha ha ha. And so on.

UK myspace a place for friends
Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and join us

PSM3's Top Eight

MySpace readers who rock our world



Alabama

ABOUT HER

"I like vodka and Belgian music. I live in Glasgow and I'm 5 foot 8. I'm trying to learn Spanish."

WOULD LIKE TO MEET

"Trent Reznor, Ray Liotta, Bruce Campbell, Tom Barman, The Strike Team (if they existed outside of The Shield), Vincent Gallo, Colin Farrell, Angelina Jolie, Owen Wilson, Ricky Gervais. Failing that, just some cool, groovy, funny people."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Guitar Hero, Kingdom Hearts 2

WHY WE MADE HER TOP 8

Good list of celebs. We like Belgian music too. Well, Andy does. He likes a Belgian band called Barbie Bangkok. We didn't dare ask.

King Rob

ABOUT HIM

"Here's the deal: I'm Rob. Man about town, looking for trouble. I'm a razor, a blazer, a kryptonite eraser."

INTERESTS

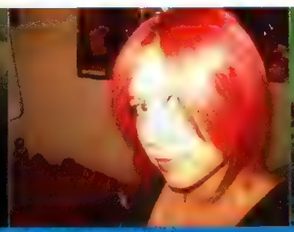
"Ninja Turtles are pretty much the best thing ever, what do you think. My fave was Leonardo, because he was blue and a leader, and could slice peoples shit off. Then I grew to love Donatello as the mutant freak crab brother I never had."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Devil May Cry 3, Metal Gear Solid 3

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

He's clearly bonkers, and we respect his Turtles love.



[SiN]derella

ABOUT HER

"hey everyone im jade but call me titch hehe ok well some of me fave bands are Rammstein, KoRn, system of a down, disturbed, bullet for my valentine. Stuff like that. Me fave colours are red and pink. I don't have a fave food."

MUSIC

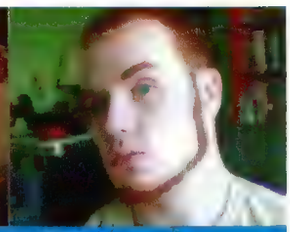
"i love death metal, heavy metal, gothic, and some punk and emo but 2 be honest i will listen 2 anything really but me fave band is Rammstein by far i went to see them they rocked."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

God Of War

WHY WE MADE HER TOP 8

She made us realise we don't listen to enough death metal.



AJ Slater

ABOUT HIM

"I tend to have facial hair of some type. Although to be awkward, I don't right now."

INTERESTS

"Pro-wrestling, gaming, reading, writing, music, my friends, the cinema and DVD, anime, japanese horror, typical horror, sci-fi, thriller, creativity, social drinking."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Manhunt, Resident Evil 4

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

A lot of us have facial hair. Except Andy because he's 12 and can't grow any. We like drinking too. Except Andy, obviously. Again.

Bentley

ABOUT HIM

"I'm a well-meaning buffoon".

INTERESTS

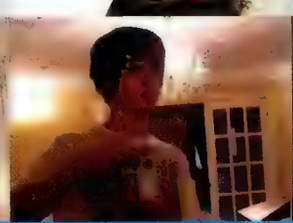
"My interests include being interested, and some day I hope to become interested in being interesting. I love comic books, my favourite is probably Marshal Law. Spider-Man is my hero."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Devil May Cry 3, Resident Evil 4

WHY HE'S TOP 8

Spider-Man is one of our heroes too, and we like well-meaning buffoons. Also, anyone who wears bunny ears while toting a pistol is OK by us.



Lozzeh

ABOUT HIM

"I'm Laurence, or Lozza if you like. I like to have a laugh and fool around. I think life is great and for the people who think the world hates them and is out to get them, I say 'EMO'." *[well said - PSM3]*

HEROES

"Lead singers.synthesizers. guitarists.bassists.drummers. song wr! rappers."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

GTA: San Andreas, Tony Hawk's 4

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

His love of life, his sense of fun and his respect for synthesizers. And we might start using exclamation marks instead of the letter 'i' too.

Chappers

ABOUT HIM

"17, go Sheriff, like doing anything that is fun to do! Like playing football even though im not that good! Also, enjoy spending time with friends, i love u guys! "

MUSIC AND FILMS

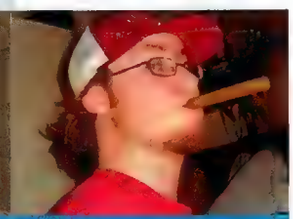
"All sorts. Into Reel Big Fish at the mo! Favourite band ever is Good Charlotte! They rule! I like any film that can make me laugh."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Kingdom Hearts 2, Guitar Hero

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We like the name 'Chappers' for some reason. 'Chappers'. Hah! Hang on – *Good Charlotte*? You're walking a fine line, Chappers.



Cashy

ABOUT HIM

"Grew up on the mean streets of Kingston in Surrey. Went to Teddington Secondary School where I totally blagged my GCSEs to the amazement of my parents."

INTERESTS

"Being fresh, beats, snowboarding, skating, DH Mountain biking"

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Tony Hawk's 4, SSX On Tour

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Yeah, being fresh is awesome. We're always fresh at PSM3. We once drove through Kingston in Surrey. It was fresh. Yeah, man. Fresh.

MySpace Want to make our Top Eight? Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and send us a friend request. We'll welcome you on board sharpish.

You What?

Online games destroy my gaming self confidence. I'm always getting beat by some 10 year old halfway up the country :(
Ben, email
We don't have that problem. We're brilliant at games. Yes.

Milf is a legend. Just been watching him playing *EyeToy: Sports* on your DVD. Artist, showman, boxer... Is there no end to his talents?
Grant, MySpace
Yes. They end just after art and boxing.

Dan G is the most manly. Rich likes metal music so he's OK with me. Joel and Andy both write very funny and smart reviews.
MetalKitten, MySpace
What about Dave?
He feels left out. He *craves* attention.

This magazine is a sausage fest at the moment!
M@, MySpace
Ah, a sausage fest! We love the traditional festival of sausages. Cumberland. Pork and apple... Oh, you didn't mean like that did you?

Reader Critic

Disagree with our reviews? Then show us how it's done

Army of two The stealth bits weren't as much fun as the violent gladiator stuff. Still good, though.

Shadow Of Rome

One of the goriest games ever, but also one of the most overlooked

Reader Profile

Name **Mike Wride**
Location **Dorchester, Dorset**
Fave games ***Metal Gear Solid 2*** **and 3,** ***Final Fantasy 10,*** ***Shadow Of The Colossus***
About me **I spend too much time on my PS2. I like Lost. (It's really good, but going a bit downhill.)**

When I first saw *Shadow Of Rome* I thought it was another attempt at a violent beat-'em-up but as I began to play it I was very pleasantly surprised. Usually I don't go for beat-'em-ups – I'm more of an RPG sort of person – but this game is not like most. I thought that its one attraction was the violence, but it has so much more to offer.

The game is set in ancient Rome. Julius Caesar has just been murdered and main character Agrippa has found out that his father has been accused. For Agrippa to save his father from execution, he must conquer the bloody gladiatorial arenas and become the most powerful gladiator in the city. Meanwhile outside the arena Agrippa's friend Octavianus must use his range of stealth skills to find out the truth about Caesar's murder.

Looks are everything

It uses a fantastic mix of stealth and explicit gore to provide a very good game. The gladiatoral arena bits are challenging, but not stupidly so. I'm not exaggerating about the gore by the way, it really is very bloodthirsty. One of the most horrific bits was when a man begged for his life while urinating himself in fear.

Shadow Of Rome is so brutal, it actually managed to make me feel guilty over the amount of blood that I had shed. This is what makes this game so good – it actually makes you feel something other than bloodlust, and in my opinion that's what makes this game so brilliant. This is an essential purchase. **Mike Wride**

Reader Verdict

Gory and fun, but with a little more depth than your average beat-'em-up. **93**

Level up Subject 'Critic' to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Or post a review to the usual address.

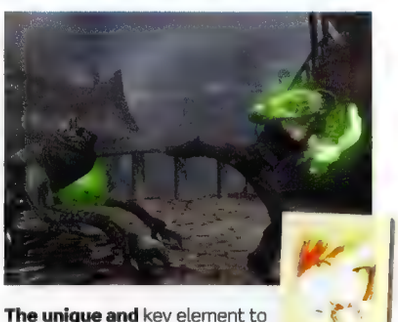
Tomb Raider Legend

Lara's newest game didn't please everyone

When I heard that Crystal Dynamics had taken over Lara I was wary, and what to you know? They just had to ruin everything like they did with the *Legacy Of Kain* games. The game is marred by shoddy animations that are not even synchronised with the sound effects – tap the joystick back for the 180 turn and try comparing it with *AOD* – rough camera movements and bad lighting. *Tomb Raider* was always dark and spooky, but this just looks bad. It also seems the developers don't know what Core Design have understood about on-screen information since 1996 – just check out the big triangle on screen! Worse is the extreme simplicity – no grip bar, an auto-direction assist... The few innovations – limited ammo, aerial shooting – can't save it. Terrible. **Abdul Rahaman** **59**

Primal

A weird adventure from the mists of time



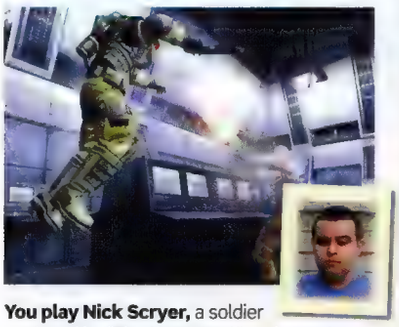
The unique and key element to *Primal* is how you can freely switch between Jen and Scree – a gargoyle – as you explore each spooky realm. Scree is capable of scaling walls and ceilings, while Jen's role is to fight off enemy beasts. This sets the player up for some original and rewarding puzzles. As you progress, Jen will acquire new demon forms that lend her some nasty flesh-tearing skills in combat, making her much more vicious.

Each of the game's realms looks stunning, especially running in 60Hz, from eerie medieval-style courtyards, to vast stony temples emitting only a weak light only from scattered urns and wooden torches.

Primal is an unsung hero in games. Released in 2002, it's floating about in second-hand bins and is one you can't miss. **Emily** **81**

"I want to see a baby Snake in *Metal Gear Solid 4*"
Rob MySpace

Psi-Ops
Grant Barter plays mind games



You play Nick Scryer, a soldier captured by "The Movement" and soon to become brainwashed into one of their super psi-soldiers. That is until a mysterious female soldier releases you from your cell moments beforehand, but is she friend or foe? Whatever the case, the stage is now set for Nick to wreak revenge on his captors and foil The Movement's plans.

The element that separates this game from all the other action titles out there is the use of psi-powers, allowing you to throw enemies all over the place. The graphics are solid even after its release two years ago, the attention to detail is perfect and you'll come back for more to find other imaginative ways to take out your enemies. And you can get it for only a tenner. **Grant Barter**

88

PSM3 You were so right!

"The amount of stuff you can do in fights is amazing. it's really varied."
Terrence, email

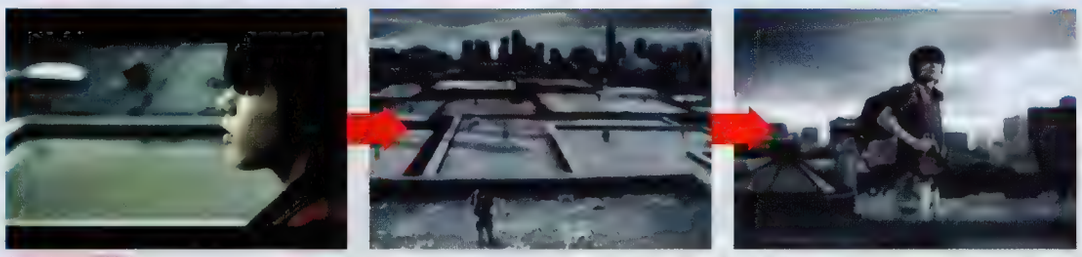
Yakuza
We said "A crime adventure with style. Bling is out, finely-tailored white suits and tattoos are in."
PSM79 | Andy Kelly | 79%

"What a repetitive waste of time. The plot makes no sense either."
Darren, email

PSM3 You were so wrong!

YouTube The Video Zone
Out there gamer vids from the cyberdepths

American PlayStation 3 commercial by Scenyx

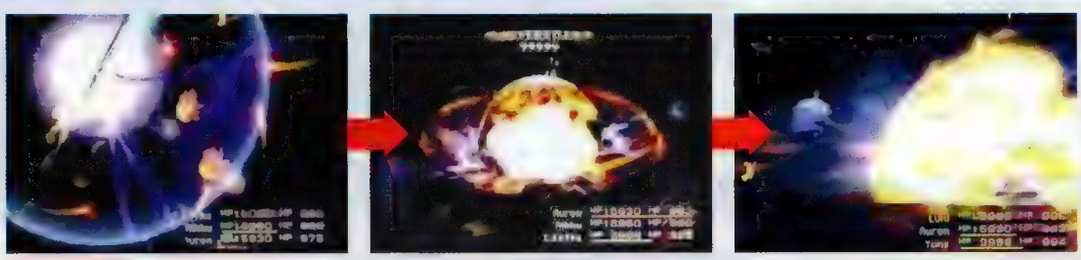


ARTISTIC A typically arty Sony advertising campaign has begun in America in the run-up to the launch of PlayStation 3. The advert is stylish, if a little bit pointlessly obscure and weird. http://tinyurl.com/y2gmqt

Batman Vs Captain Jack Sparrow by Nodqcaw

BRAWLERS There are hundreds of custom *Smackdown* videos on YouTube but we chose this one because the guys at nodq.com – a wrestling website – did their own mad commentary. http://tinyurl.com/ye36zm

Final Fantasy X overdrives by JudgeSpear



LEET SKILLS This impressive 15-minute video shows off every single overdrive move in the game, from Auron's epic 'banishing blade' to the enormous Aeons and their screen-filling mega lasers. http://tinyurl.com/yzbkex

Male restroom etiquette by zsOverman

INGENIOUS Some clever sort has created this spoof public information video entirely in *The Sims*. Not only is it fun to watch but it also raises some good points – like how to avoid rogue plops. http://tinyurl.com/mzj57

@ Created your own brilliant fan vid? Or just found a gem you want to share? Email psm3@futurenet.co.uk and tell us all about it.

ON THE DISC
Hear our review of *Scarface* on the disc now.

Reader Challenge

Pit your skills versus our fiendish test

DO THIS!

Earn as many 'balls' as you can in Scarface's opening level

Use your skills to escape Tony's mansion, accumulating as many 'balls' as you can along the way. Top ball-earning tips include using the taunt button just as you kill someone, scoring plenty of lethal headshots and using your blind rage whenever you can. You have to make it out of the lobby, through the basement, outside, through the maze and to the main steps. Extra points for stylish kills and perfectly-timed taunts. Are you man enough to take this challenge? MOST BALLS WINS!

Game Scarface: The World Is Yours
Challenge Get through the first level with as many 'balls' as possible
Deadline A strict December 4. Get going!

WIN THIS!

Courtesy of our good friends at Game.com, the top 10 PS2 games can be yours!

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Game.co.uk are the nation's favourite online games store. Established in 1996 they've sold over 40 million games to gamers throughout the world and are masters of fast, safe delivery and bargain rock-bottom prices. When it comes to securing day one new releases The Next Level at Game is the only place we trust. Why not give them a try? You know it makes sense.

www.game.co.uk

HOW TO TAPE

1 Start Here

Plug your PS2 into the back of your video/DVD recorder. Choose the AV input channel on your video and you should see your PS2 on your TV.

2 Do your best

Now just record away. Any tape or DVD on any format welcome.

3 Send it in

Write us a short letter explaining what's on your tape or disc. Don't forget to give us your name and address. And PLEASE include a pic of yourself – or email it to us at www.psm3@futurenet.

LAST MONTH'S WINNER!

Well done to **Nathan McDonald**, trounced Brazil 6-2 in *Pro Evo 6*. Just like England in real life. Ish.

Post: Put your tape in an envelope, mark it '*Scarface* Challenge' and send to the usual address. That's PSM3, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW y'know. Entries in by December 4 - or else!

"Does Sony have competition in the next-gen war?"
Rich email

Beat The Team

Think you're good at *PES6*? Take on PSM3 and find out...

"Our heartiest congratulations to Konami for striking the first blow on behalf of the great British public – by making us look like wazzocks. When we told you last month that *PES6* would be lag-free, what we actually meant is that the servers would be near-permanently locked, most games crash and lag is (often) worse than ever. But we digress...

1 PSM3 (1) vs ...Fox... (3)
"Suitably enraged after spending two hours setting up three games – which all crashed – we square up with Foxy boy, who roars into a lag assisted 2-0 lead as we get John Terry sent off for making a horror tackle in Matrix slo-mo. A Rooney consolation and missed pen isn't enough. Boo."

2 PSM3 (3) vs KAEDE (2)
"KAEDE's liberal use of the F word fails to protect him from some scintillating play and some frankly rude Les Saha tap ins. When Park Ji Sung rattles the bar – 'Ahhh!' goads KAEDE – we briefly mope, before dismissing the rogue 3-2 in a nervous finish. For him. We could have scored six."

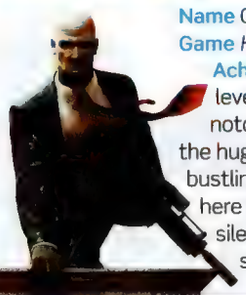
3 PSM3(2) vs S'VARAN (1)
"Sticking with what we know best – winning with Manchester United – we give SEVKETVARAN, to give him his full name, a football lesson. Followed by a spelling lesson, because we suspect his real name is 'Alan'. Diabolical lag spoils an otherwise easy encounter. Have at thee, cads!"

Final score PSM3 United: 2 - You Lot: 1
"Two wins and a tragic loss. *PES6* isn't the garden of roses we were promised – but we'll be buying shears."

Online Want to make Nath and Dan D hurl their pads in anger? Then play them at *PES* on November 30. Look for the PSM3 lobby and Real_PSM3.

Look! I Can Do This!

Send us your amazing gaming feats and we'll send you some games



Name Grymlok
Game *Hitman: Blood Money*
Achievement The Murder of Crows level in *Hitman: Blood Money* is notoriously complicated thanks to the huge scale of the level and the bustling crowds outside. But Grymlok here has managed to earn himself a silent assassin rating and tears through the level in just short of eight minutes. Deadly.

Stage 01 Agent 47 offs one of the snipers and nicks his bird costume.

Stage 03 To kill the boss, Agent 47 waits until his henchmen leave and takes him out with a syringe.

Stage 02 The tourists get suspicious, but a waiter outfit fools them.

PSM3 Verdict
Killing every target silently with the wire and syringe was key to his success, as was his early choice to dress as a waiter, giving him access to the nightclubs where the two snipers hang out.

92

Post Mark your tapes 'I Can Do This' and send it to us at the usual address.

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DEVIL MAY CRY 4
AFRIKA
15

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Inside issue one of PlayStation.

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Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION

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THE NEXT-G

We've got a PS3. Months of waiting, months of worrying and it's finally actually here. And it's a brown box about the size of your Grandad's video with the future of videogames inside. Only an inconspicuous serial number on the outside of the cardboard packaging containing our PS3 (featuring the letters 'PS3') gave the game away. Thank God our postie is a top bloke or it'd be eBayed for millions by now.

So what have we got? We've got the final PS3 hardware. The build that will be going on sale in Japan on November 11 and in America on November 17. AKA the machine that will be in lucky owner's homes by the team you read this. Our PS3 is different from theirs in that the firmware (the brains of the machine) enables the machine to run pre-release software. We have the same thing for PS2 and PSP. It's called a 'Test' machine – final hardware, with special security modifications that lets it play discs burnt by games developers (and let us play work-in-progress games).

Unfortunately the 'Test' nature of the firmware on board has its disadvantages

PLAYSTATION 3 EN STARTS NOW

Sony said that it didn't begin until they said so. They just pressed 'go'...

too. Our machine doesn't play Blu-ray movies. It doesn't do anything if you connect to a PSP, iPod, memory cards or any of the bonus 'usefuls' outlined by Sony so far. And – at the time of writing – despite being able to go online and sign up our PS3 (and our bank details), there isn't actually anything there yet. We'll be putting a Japanese final machine (with all the features on board) through its paces for ourselves next month. For now, though, check page eight for the very latest on PS3 online – and here's everything else you could ever want to know and bit more besides.

Bigger and better

You never quite get over seeing PS3 in the flesh for the first time. It's conspicuously large and instantly becomes the focal point of any room it's placed in. That's not to say that it always looks great, however. In its horizontal position it's a hard shape to love. The smaller base of the machine forms an invisible plinth that holds the curved body aloft, so what should be a smooth sexy curve never quite gels what with its sheer height above the table top. PS3 looks... well... *massive*.

Things improve when you place it on end, however. From the right angle PS3 looks positively slender. The fat base section is now behind the smooth curve and you can kid yourself that it's much thinner than it actually is. The only problem with this viewpoint is that the word 'PlayStation 3' across the top appears to be slightly misaligned. If you were unable to see the entire

What's in the box?

The leads that'll power your gaming

Let's make one thing clear. The PS3 we have is an early machine supplied to us by Sony. Important descisions as to the the final contents of the Euro box haven't been made yet but, for the record, here's what was in ours:

A PS3
The reason why we're all here. It comes wrapped in a shroud of padded plastic and held in place with two mighty cardboard bomb-proof end cheeks.

A Sixaxis joypad
The famous vibration-free PS3 pad. Lots more on this later on.

UK power lead
Not much to say about this...

Japanese power lead
And even less to say about this.

An Ethernet cable
Just in case you don't have a wireless connection at home, here's a 'wire' for you to plug your PS3 into your router. Your standard RJ45 connection. Exciting, non?

A composite video lead
What? No HDMI lead? Our PS3 came with the lowest of the low – a composite video lead. Just the sort of thing you DON'T want to be using to show off your PS3. Here's hoping they include an HDMI lead in the UK box come March 2007.

A USB to MiniUSB lead
Of the sort used to plug a PSP into a PC. The example supplied with PlayStation 3 is of a particularly thick, high build quality. Wik.

PlayStation 3

"The metallic strip at the front prevents dust being sucked into the machine when used horizontally"

10 things you can't miss about PS3

1 It's big

The machine is 98mm tall, 325mm wide and 274mm thick.

2 It's heavy

Our machine weighs five kilograms. Your PS2 weighs two kilos.

3 The flap

The flap is spring-loaded, so it stays open if you lift it.

4 The buttons are 'touch sensitive'

Well, they're 'aware that you've got your finger resting on them' at any rate. They don't move down. There's no click, no 'press' action at all. You just place your finger on the flat 'Power' icon or 'Eject' icon on the edge near the disc slot and the machine does what you want.

5 Extra LEDs

Two LED lights flicker when the hard-drive is in use, or if Wi-Fi data transfer is in progress.

6 It's shiny

No matter how many times you see it, when PS3 emerges from its cardboard coffin still takes our breath away. It's shiny to an impractical degree.

7 There are no screws at all

PS3 feels solid and hard but is made up of a number of panels which lock together to form its unique shape. Squeeze it and you can hear a groan as the machine flexes.

8 Metal trim isn't metal

The shiny silver trim on the 60Gb PS3 isn't metal - it's silver plastic. The metallic front strip prevents dust being sucked into the machine via the air intakes at the front when used horizontally. Don't get us wrong – your PS3 isn't a hoover – but it's a small advantage over the 'air-dam' free 20Gb version.

9 It rattles a bit

The Blu-ray drive is just a slot on the machine, but there's an arm inside that clanks if you shake it.

10 It's see-through

The machine is made from thick, dark, hard, plastic but – amazingly – it's transparent. Shine a bright light at the machine and you can see its innards (or at least the panels and parts that near the surface).

Play your cards right Take your pic of formats. The 60Gb PS3 has slots under its flap, ready to take on all comers.

surface from back edge through to disc-tray you'd swear it was too far forwards. Odd.

Perhaps more attention-grabbing than the size, however, is the superb, other-worldly finish of the machine. Sony call it 'Clear Black' and if that sounds like rubbish it's because there is no way to sensibly describe it. PS3 is mirror-shiny. All over. There's a single grade of plastic used throughout and while it appears black it is in fact clear – like the lenses of a particularly

60Gb version, incidentally). Those of you expecting actual chrome will be disappointed to learn that the strips are plastic, though you can only tell if you give them a prod – likewise the frame around the disc slot. OK, it's unnecessary and pointlessly 'bling', but we like it all the same.

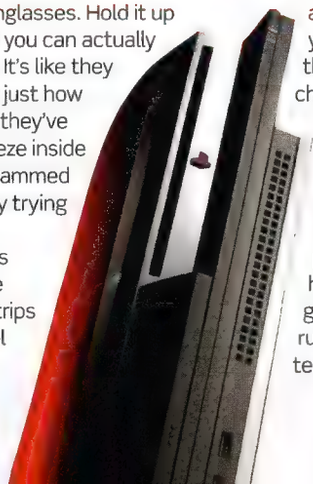
Chrome ranger

It's therefore a shame that there's no way that you can keep PS3 looking this good (short of unboxing the machine

"Hold it up to bright light and you can see PS3's innards"

evasive pair of sunglasses. Hold it up to bright light and you can actually see PS3's innards. It's like they want you to know just how much technology they've managed to squeeze inside – you can see it crammed inside, desperately trying to burst out

The blackness is accented with the famous chrome strips of the 60Gb model (ours *is* a full-fat



and placing it directly into your AV cabinet). Whether it's the air intake, the static charge of the machine in use or just the preposterous shininess of the surface, it looks dusty five minutes after each wipedown. And don't even think about picking it up with your bare hands – fingerprints become grease smears the more you rub. For our photos we spent ten minutes buffing it up with a

Ridge Racer 7

Back for a whole new generation

Ridge Racer is a pleasant surprise. It's slick and slippery like a greased-up seal and the bright, chunky arcade visuals look stunning in HD. When it first arrived we almost flipped – the menu was full of options this early version only allows you to select one game mode (Arcade) and one track (a jungle with lovely misty waterfalls) which you drive in a red Assoluto.

Handling is typical *Ridge*, but the drifting feels superb. Anyone used to the game will be up with the pack in no time, admiring the statues, sculptures and jungle waterfalls of the countryside as they zip past. Special mention to the bit where you drive behind the waterfall and the combination of water spray and darkness give rise to huge sexy lighting trails from the car in front.

The nitro system is here too and it produces a new effect where pixels become distorted and noisy. Odd... But cool.

PS3 Ratings Explained

We've rated our PS3 games on the following merits:

Next-gen power
Do they have the graphics and sound befitting the true next gen? Just how much PS3 power are they using?

Tilt functionality
Do they use the new Sixaxis tilt functions or stick with the old-school sticks?

PSM3 Excitement rating
Just how excited are we about it?

Rating

Next-gen power
It looks hard and videogame cool rather than 'real'

Tilt functionality
None so far. We'll stick with the sticks thanks

PSM3 Excitement rating
We love Ridge (a bit too much)

PS3's XMB Interface

AKA: Your PS3's menu screen

Choose your user

Each PS3 user can have their own settings (though the PS3 uses one universal setting for your TV and sound system). Adding a new user is simple. Your first task each time you switch on PS3 is to choose your user. You'll then have access to their library of photos, music, downloads and so on.

Settings

Set your TV. Test your EyeToy (yes, it does work with PS3). Set your sound system. Tweak your network settings. Whatever you need to make PS3 work, you'll find it here.

Photos

Upload and browse your pics here

PlayStation 3

"Ridge 7 is slick and slippery like a greased-up seal and looks absolutely stunning in hi-def"

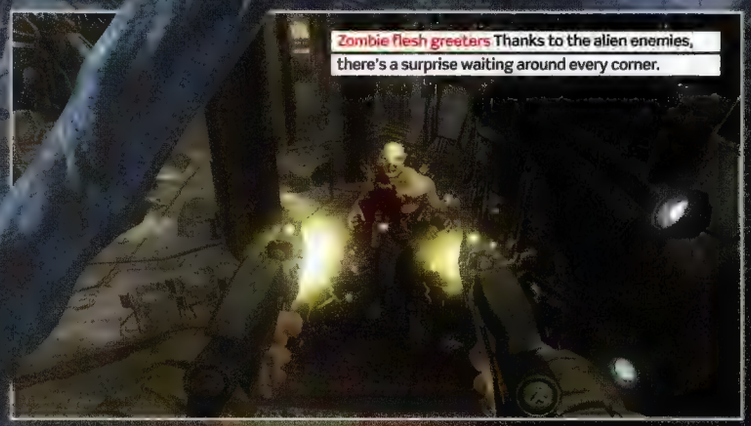
Music
Rip CDs and listen to your music library here – complete with a pretty hi-def rhythmn responsive graphics display.

Video
Select movies on disc (Blu-ray or DVD) here, or choose to play something from your library here.

Game
Your game saves and downloaded games appear here, along with any games that you might have inserted in the drive.

Network
Choose this option to get on the PlayStation network, surf the net, play multi-player games or visit the PlayStation shop to buy downloads

Friends
Quick and easy access to your friends. Send them instant messages here.



Zombie flesh greeters Thanks to the alien enemies, there's a surprise waiting around every corner.

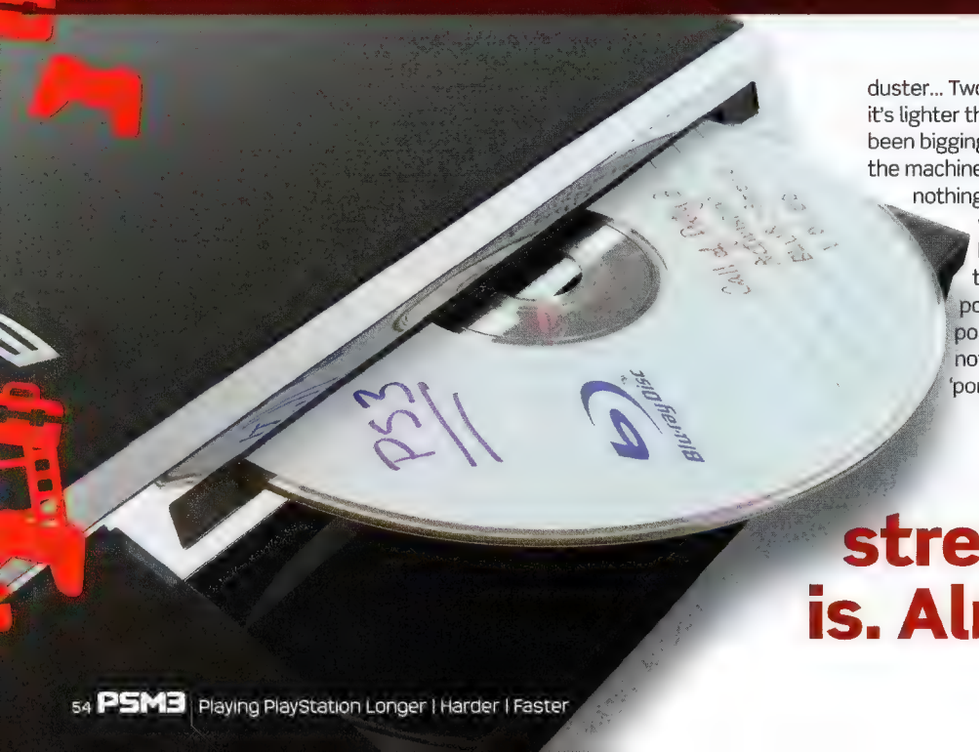
Resistance: Fall of Man

Can PlayStation 3's premium FPS outgun *Call Of Duty 3*?

Resistance is punishingly difficult, but we like a challenge and the balls-out action and gorgeous set-pieces make it feel like a kind of sci-fi *Call of Duty*. Comparisons are inevitable – they're both tough, violent FPS games – but while *COD3* deals in realism and a vast simulation of the theatre of war (with you as a tiny part getting shelled to pieces in the middle of it), *Resistance* is much more like a *videogame*. The stunning alien designs go some way to make this feel other-worldly but it's the narrow corridor of thrills the game lays on that puts it almost in the same vein as *TimeSplitters* – except that the first level takes place in York town centre, leading eventually to a leafy area of Nottingham...

We've always wondered what alien-besieged middle England would look like, and now we know – messy, covered in rubble and dotted with explosive barrels.

There's not a great subtlety in the gameplay but blowing the crap out of some of the most amazing creatures ever seen is always fun. More on this very soon indeed...

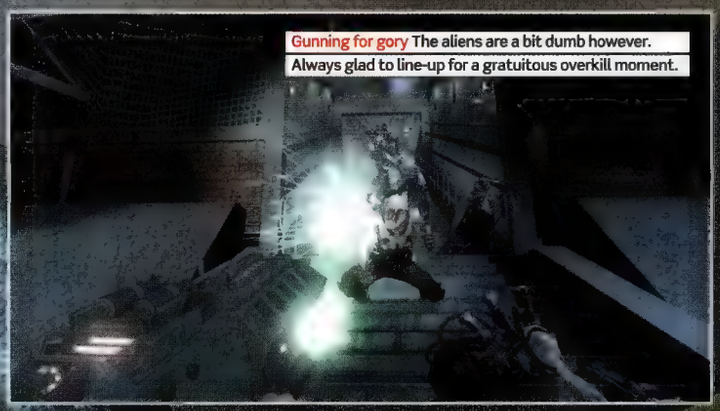


duster... Two bits of good news: firstly it's lighter than you're expecting. We've been bigging up the sheer weight of the machine and, while it is heavy, it's nothing too back-breaking. It's way lighter than your PC's body and certainly lighter than an Xbox 360 plus power pack. Not exactly portable, you understand, but nothing like lugging a 'portable TV' around.

Secondly, it's quiet. And it's hard for us to stress *just how quiet* it is. Almost silent in fact. Only after a few hours did the fan apparently step up a gear and even then it was quieter than our PS2. But most of the time there's *nothing*, interspersed with tiny clicks from the hard drive and barely audible disc spins. If it wasn't for the lights on the front you really can't tell if it's on.

It's an amazing achievement given the size of the cooling fan (which you

"It's hard for us to stress just how quiet it is. Almost silent in fact"



Gunning for gory The aliens are a bit dumb however. Always glad to line-up for a gratuitous overkill moment.

Ratings

Next-gen power

You can see the PS3 difference here

Tilt functionality

Shaking off grappling enemies is a cool feature

PSM3 Excitement rating

Can't wait to play more. It's looking top class

can *just* see through the base of the machine). A disc the size of a beermat spins, sucking in air through the front vents of the machine (next to the USB ports) and blowing it out of the back of the machine (by the HDMI port) and the top (or right hand end if you're horizontal) of the machine. And the machine gets warm-to-hot surprisingly quickly. Thirty seconds after switch on you can already feel the heat blowing out of the slots, which only goes to show how efficient the cooling process is – this is heat being safely extracted from the machine, after all, and that's a good thing. Including the power supply inside the machine was a brave move, but they've pulled it off. As for overheating, we have no evidence. We've run ours all day and while it got hot it never surprised us to the touch. Quite how it'll fare sandwiched in a cupboard between your AV amp and your Sky+ box may be another matter. Block those vents at your (house-burning) peril.

Feel the quality

A word about build. In the world of consoles, PS3 is without equal. There is a little bit of 'give' in the curved panels but PS3, for all its mass and plastic, feels amazingly solid. And it's impossible to see how they put the thing together. The seams between panels are invisible ("is that a seam or a design detail?") and there are no fastenings or screws anywhere on machine's exterior.

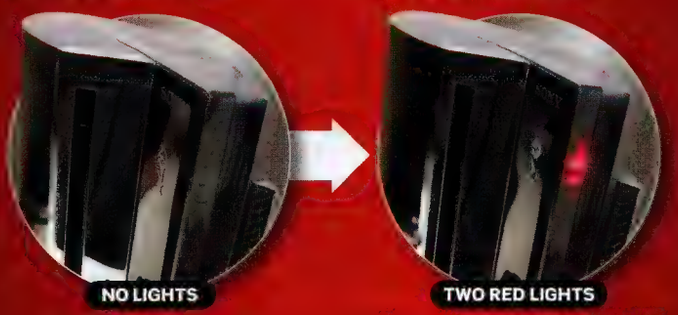
So we've got the machine out. We've polished it up and plugged it in. What happens? PS3 first defaults to composite video outputs and it's this

"Thirty seconds after switch on you can already feel the heat blowing out of the slots"

Lightening the load

Your PS3 is trying to tell you something...

On the front edge there are two small LED lights which show what the machine is doing.



NO LIGHTS

No power.

TWO RED LIGHTS

We have power coming in at the back and the back panel switch has been set to 'on'. The machine is now is stand-by mode.

TWO GREEN FLASHING LIGHTS

Press 'Power' and the machine gives a beep. The machine is on and the start-up sequence starts. Hold on!

TWO STEADY GREEN LIGHTS

Five seconds later, the start animation is over and you're asked on-screen to select a profile. Congrats. Your PS3 is now officially 'on'.

A GREEN LIGHT AND A FLASHING BLUE LIGHT

Push a disc halfway into the slot. The machine is on and a disc has been inserted into the machine which its in the process of mounting.

A GREEN LIGHT AND A STEADY BLUE LIGHT

This is the machines usual 'on' configuration – it has power, it's turned on and there is a disc mounted in the slot. With us so far?

A GREEN LIGHT AND A FLASHING BLUE LIGHT

Press 'Eject' and the machine gives a beep. The blue light flashes for a few seconds as the disc is unmounted. The disc then appears in the slot at the front.

TWO FLASHING GREEN LIGHTS

Press and hold 'Power' for a couple of seconds and the machine beeps. The machine begins it's shutdown procedure and you can remove your finger from 'Power'. This takes about four seconds. The hard drive light flickers as the machine powers down, then you'll have two red lights again and the PS3 is off. Phew.

Rating

Next-gen power

It's almost too sharp in 1080p mode (like a PC game)

Tilt functionality

We like the flight effects but fighting is a bit random

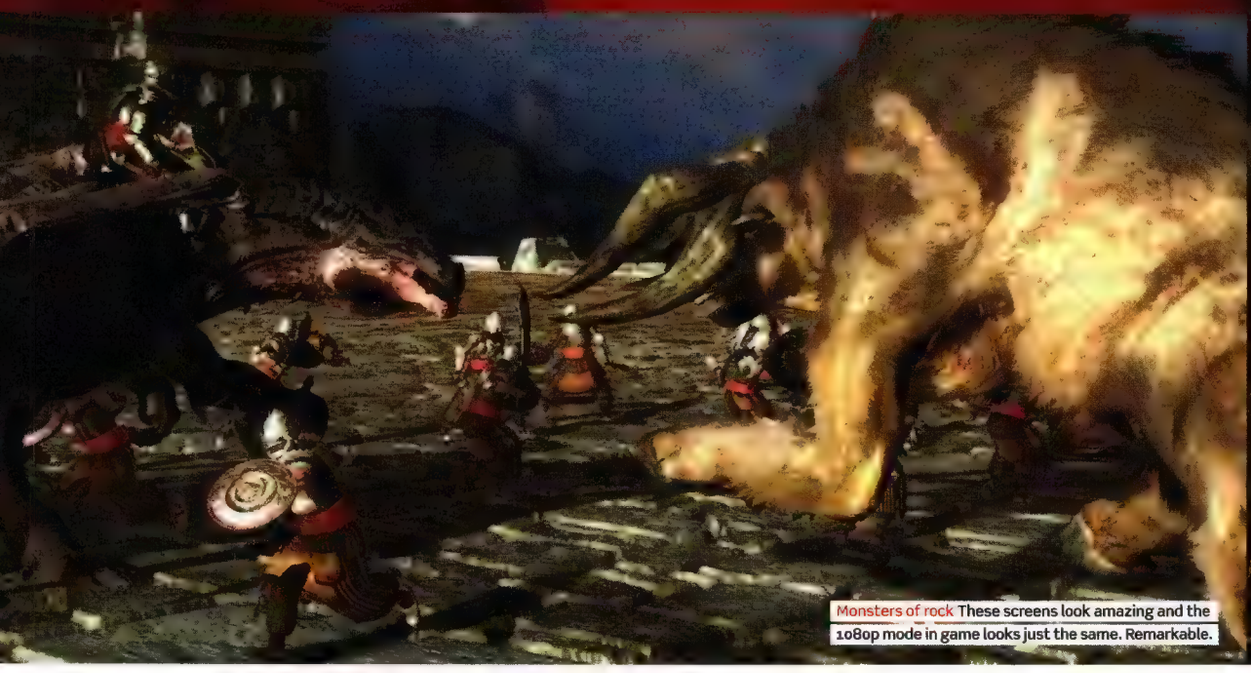
PSM3 Excitement rating

Great graphics demo, but we're not desperate to play

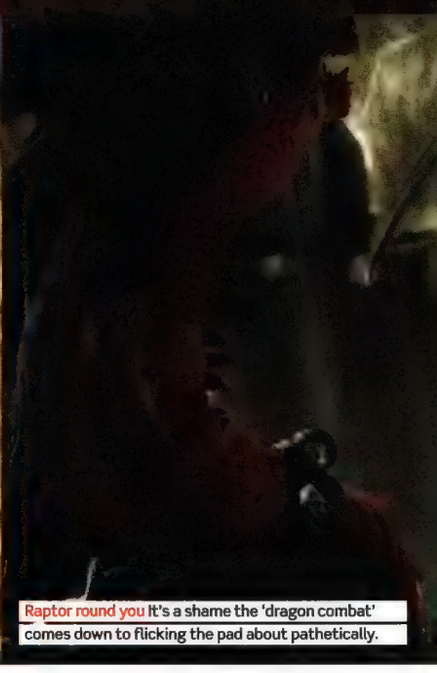
Lair

Original? Yes. Gorgeous? Yes. However...

Lair plays a lot like ancient fantasy shooter *Panzer Dragoon*, but with tilt-sensitive controls. You have to jolt the pad towards enemies to attack them which is strange, but overall we're impressed. The dragons look magnificent. But, if we're honest, it's more of a graphics demo than an actual game at the moment. The lightweight tutorial involves barely any play and you spend most of your time floating about admiring the responsive tilt controls, the lighting effects, shadows and amazingly realistic-looking rocks. Hmm.



Monsters of rock These screens look amazing and the 1080p mode in game looks just the same. Remarkable.



Raptor round you It's a shame the 'dragon combat' comes down to flicking the pad about pathetically.

Hook it up to your TV

PS3 can handle the lot

SCART

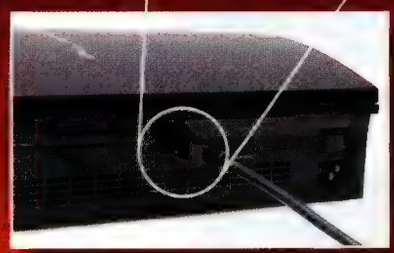
First came the bog standard RGB SCART connection that we use for our PS2. PS3 looks good. Great in fact. There's no mistaking the extra power on display and frame-rates are suitably next-gen.

Component

Next came the component output. This lead is quite hard to come by and it's debatable as to whether using one in the component inputs of your hi-def TV actually makes PS2 look any better. With PS3, though, it's different story. PS3 looks *superb* through component, unleashing the extra pixels and giving a true hi-def image.

HDMI

Finally we tried an HDMI lead. This is the best option you can get, digitally transferring the image from your PS3 over to your TV pixel-for-pixel. It looks great although it's debatable as to whether it looks any better than component.



Multiple TV no-go

One weird (annoying) thing is if you intend to use your PS3 with a couple of TVs. Your PS3 has one Display setting across all its users. Set it to HDMI for the TV in the living room and you won't get any picture via RGB SCART (that TV in the bedroom). The solution is to change the setting but you have to do that *before* you move the machine. *And* because you need to see the screen to select 'Yes' to the change, you need to connect to your TV with two leads (or swap them over) to do it. Then go through the whole process to change it back again. How about an RGB SCART default when there's no HDMI lead in, eh?

lead that we got in the box with ours. This is surprising, given Sony's relentless PR barrage about 'hi-def' and '1080p'. Still, at least with a crummy composite video lead everyone who buys one is guaranteed that they'll be able to see what's going on. Problem is, that it's not going to look very good. Start praying that Sony Europe decide to put an HDMI cable in there too (or at least make sure you've shelled out £25-odd for one before you unbox PS3 and fire it up with your HDTV).

Power extreme

So what does it sound like? Well, it sounds like an orchestra tuning up (that familiar soft note of all the instruments in an orchestra playing together shortly before being interrupted with the tap of the conductor's baton on lectern). While the baton tap is missing its still a beautifully evocative sound. This is no raucous power chord, or cutesy 'pling!' this start up says... *class*.

And what's the best way to describe the start-up animation? Is it waves on water? Drifts of smoke? *Milk*? The image fades up out of black and the waves move from left to right behind a simple, off-centre Sony Computer Entertainment logo. Anyone who's used to Apple's default desktops will be familiar with the flat colours and smooth curves of PS3's menu screen. The waves continue to animate left to right. Like a shiny satin sheet being ruffled by the wind. Or a... Oh you get the idea.

If you've used PSP you'll be up and running in seconds here. PS3's menus are exactly the same: Select a feature by moving left and right (Video, Photos, Network, etc) and then options within that feature by moving up and down. ⊗ says 'yes' to options while ◎ takes you back. And there's even an option to reverse this too.

Oh, yes: The joypad. You get one in the box – Sony's brand new Sixaxis joypad. No more DualShock (because it doesn't shake any more) so out goes vibration and in comes tilt sensing in six dimensions plus

Not remotely subtle This is the beast of a remote control that Sony are selling alongside PS3. It's Bluetooth so you don't have to point it at the machine. Now *that's* the future.

Feature

Hands on with the Sixaxis pad

The shocking truth about the DualShock's sequel

The Sixaxis pad is Sony's new way to play. How does it compare with a DualShock 2? Well, the two are amazingly similar. They are exactly the same size and shape. The only differences are a thicker centre section and trimmed away plastic around the L1 and R1 buttons. This leaves a large section of the buttons exposed, giving them a long, spring-loaded throw allowing them to act like the triggers on an Xbox 360 pad. Already, the driving games we've played (*MotorStorm*, *Gran Turismo HD* and *Ridge Racer 7*) have adopted R2 as accelerator and L2 as brake. Expect this to become the norm. It's worth mentioning that there is a 'click' at the maximum depression, like the L3 and R3 controls you get by clicking a DualShock's sticks down (which is repeated here).

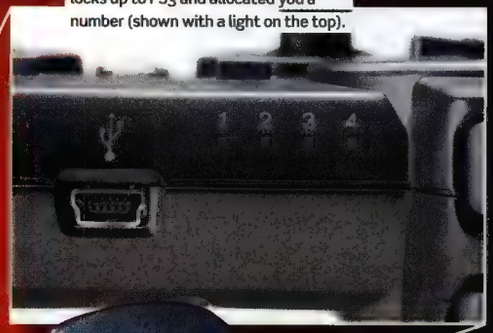
The rest of the buttons are unchanged. Same feel, same size. The sticks are slightly different however. The mushroom-like top surface of the stick is slightly smaller, likewise the central core. This means that the sticks have a slightly greater throw on them, which gives you a greater degree of control. In play, however, we couldn't notice any difference. Still, it makes sense on paper.

The Select and Start buttons look and feel the same and the pointless Analogue button of the DualShock 2 has given way to the new 'PS' button. Pressing this will give mid-game access to network features (and your PS3's settings menu) but at present, as described earlier, you get just a battery indicator, quit game and 'turn off' options. A final neat feature is that this button glows red when the battery is low, or if you're connected via the USB lead to the front of the PS3.

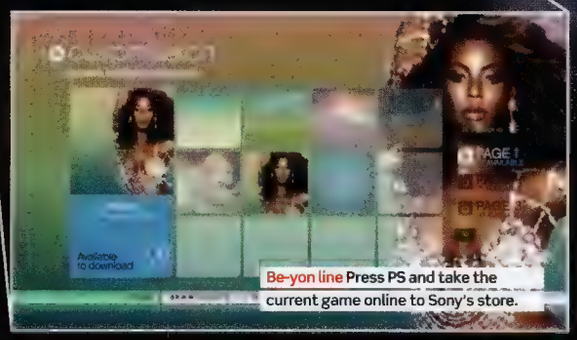
Time to talk about the pad's big plus – the much hyped Sixaxis tilt control. Yes, it works, and yes it's very clever. You can drive in *MotorStorm* by turning the pad like a steering wheel or fly your dragon in *Lair* by tilting and swooping the pad, but we're still not convinced that this is much more than a gimmick. Fact is that everyone reverts to standard stick control after a few minutes, despite the tilt function being as accurate and predictable as it could be. And, if we're honest, we do miss the vibration feature. Collisions in *MotorStorm* would be that bit more violent if the pad jerked in your hands and when your *Ridge Racer* is scrabbling for grip you've no instant, tangible way of knowing.

Final verdict? We approve. It's laughable that they didn't dare trying anything more revolutionary, but why change a winning formula? Getting to grips with PS3 has been a breeze and that's in no small part thanks to the comfort and familiarity of the Sixaxis pad.

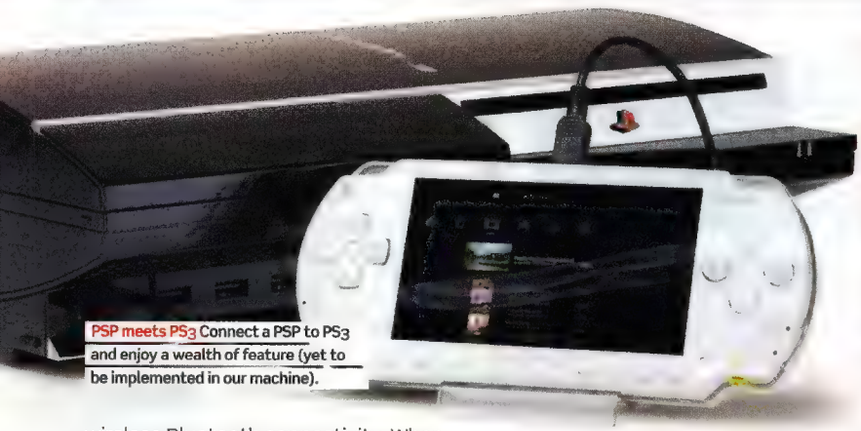
Trigger happy The L2 and R2 buttons have a massive analogue throw on them.



Numbers up Turn on your pad and it locks up to PS3 and allocated you a number (shown with a light on the top).



Be-yon line Press PS and take the current game online to Sony's store.



PSP meets PS3 Connect a PSP to PS3 and enjoy a wealth of feature (yet to be implemented in our machine).

"Only actually leaving the office caused the PS3 to lose touch"

wireless Bluetooth connectivity. When PS3 starts up, it'll sit waiting for you to engage a pad. Press the 'PS' button on your chosen controller and the bank of four lights on its top edge begin to flash as it searches for a PS3. Within a second it'll find your PS3 and be assigned a player number (1 to 4, indicated by the steady light on the top). You can connect up to seven pads to a PS3, Sony say. How do they show player numbers five to seven? Simple – they illuminate multiple buttons – player seven is shown with an illuminated 4 and 3. Clever, eh? As for how all seven controllers work together, we'll have to wait for a seven-player game before we get to try.

Got it on lockdown

We were delighted at how solid the connection with PS3 and the pad is. They lock together in less than a second with a single fleeting 'PS' button pad and, if you turn the machine off it automatically switches off all the connected pads, saving their battery power. With the PS3 in stand by mode a press of 'PS' brings the machine back to life in an instant. And as for range, we found it to be way in excess of the 10m boasted by Sony. Only *actually leaving the office* and going downstairs caused the machine to lose touch. That said, going to the floor below the PS3 brought it back into range. We're impressed.

And the lifespan of the pads is astounding. We completely forgot that

"When the true 'thrust' of the gameplay involves bashing buttons, then you've got problems"

Rating

Next-gen power

Looks 'nice'. That's not really saying much is it?

Tilt functionality

None yet. But the finished game will use it

PSM3 Excitement rating

We've played this a lot. We've played it enough

Genji: Days Of The Blade

But can it cut it as a launch game?

Having played the original *Genji* a hell of a lot, we felt instantly at home with *Genji 2*. Remarkably, despite the 'giant crab' horrors of E3, it's actually OK to play. Amazing, fluid animation and a trio of varied characters you can switch to at any point during the level. Brilliantly, THAT giant crab is in the demo we have, although we couldn't figure out how to flip it over for that much maligned 'massive damage' attack. Dang.

Problems come in terms of longevity and overall gameplay. There are lots of nice ideas in here but when the true 'thrust' of the gameplay involves hacking things up with swords by bashing buttons, then running to the next graphical showcase down the road (and hacking it up with a sword) then you've got problems. We'll reserve final judgement for the final polish on gameplay and graphics, but we're a little disappointed in this one.

Sword off Explore foreign lands... and chop their inhabitants into tiny pieces. OK, but that's about it.

Gear for the job Only when we receive landmark PS3 titles such *Metal Gear 4* will PS3 really shine.

they were battery powered, using one on and off for two days before the 'PS' button surprised us by lighting up (an indicator that it needs a recharge).

Supercharged

Incidentally, if you press the 'PS' button at the menu screen a small box appears top-right to show you what number controller you are plus how much battery life you have via a neat battery graphic. Charging the pads is easy. You plug it into one of the PS3's ports via the supplied (and pleasingly heavy-duty) USB cable. Ours was fully charged again in a couple of hours. Of course, even a 'flat' pad can be used again the instant it's plugged in. So, in theory, with PS3's four USB ports, you can charge up four pads (but you'd need four USB leads too and there's no indicator so far that these will come with each additional joypad you buy).

So what of the magical 'PS' button? What does it do? Well, right now it doesn't do much. Press and hold for a couple of seconds during play and you get a menu option to quit the game, turn off the PS3 or choose a different controller number. Which is cool, but we can only assume that full access to the PS3's networking features, chat, shop etc, will be built into finished games. Lots more next month.

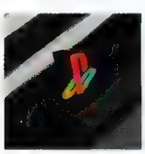
"Visibly unlike games you've seen and played before"

PSM3 Reckons

The wait is over. And it's been worth it. PS3 looks and feels gorgeous. We love the way it makes sense, the way that it does what it does and way that everything just *works*. It feels like a £400 piece of kit. Unbox a PS3 and it's like slipping on a Rolex or sitting in a Bentley – you're left in no doubt that this the king of consoles.

Of course all this plush is pointless without games but the indications are that PS3 is going to deliver on this front too. Our first batch of test games show that PS3 is not only powerful but *different*. True ground-breaking titles may be some way off but even this first batch are visibly unlike games you've seen and played before. There's a definite 'PS3 sheen' to the games. Xbox 360 games can look PC-like at times. PS3 games have their own distinct look, it's certainly not as simple as ramping up the res and making everything shiny.

If Sony can keep their Blu-ray movie playback and Network promises – and there's every indication that they will – then we can only fall even further in love. We can't wait to get back to playing.



Next Month The playtest continues

We go to Japan and buy one on day one launch, November 11
We plug in PSP, iPods, cameras and more
We play PS2 and PSone games on PS3
We go shopping on the PS network. Don't miss it!

MotorStorm

PS3's dream demo comes good

It's gone from great to terrible to great again. Yes, the game that has drawn the most gasps and yelps of all the PS3 games is (surprise, surprise) *MotorStorm*. We've had three versions of the demo and every time it gets better. The latest is absolutely mental, especially when you're crashing through squads of bikers in your buggy sending bodies flying everywhere. In fact the mud effects almost (that's *almost*) live up to the promise of the very first Sony video. Our latest version is littered with nice touches, including crowds of people on the tracks, dynamic animations as you fall to your doom, better ragdoll physics and a much smoother frame rate. That said, the second demo track chugs slightly under the stunning scenery strain. Hope the finished code fixes it.

PS2 Versus PS3

Cross-console comparisons abound

So how do the first PS3 games stack up against PS2's early efforts?

PS3's	is PS2's
Resistance: Fall of Man	TimeSplitters
MotorStorm	Wild Wild Racing
Genji: Days of the Blade	Dynasty Warriors 2
Call of Duty 3	Medal of Honor Frontline
Ridge Racer 7	Ridge Racer 5

PlayStation 3

"Crowds of people on the tracks, better ragdoll physics and a smoother frame-rate"

Rating

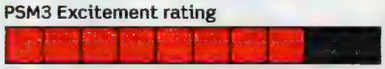
Next-gen power

If anything it pushes PS3 too far (it can chug a bit)

Tilt functionality

The tilt steering is cool (but we'd still rather stick it)

PSM3 Excitement rating



It's a lot of fun. Can't wait to try the finished game

The Games

What you can play on day one

The Americans have got a pretty good line-up games, but things will get even better by the time the machine launches in the UK in March. Here's what you've got to look forward to:

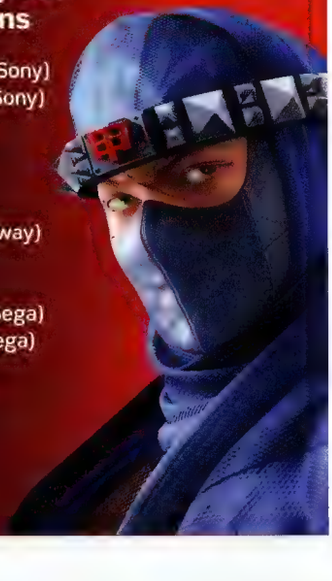
US November 17 Launch Line-Up

Resistance: Fall of Man (Sony)
NBA 07 (Sony)
Genji: Days Of The Blade (Sony)
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII (Ubisoft)
Call Of Duty 3 (Activision)
Fight Night Round 3 (EA)
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion (Ubisoft)
F.E.A.R. (Vivendi)

Full Auto 2: Battlelines (Sega)
Madden NFL 07 (EA)
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance (Activision)
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire (Namco Bandai)
NBA 2K7 (2K Sports)
Need For Speed Carbon (EA)
NHL 2K7 (2K Sports)
Ridge Racer 7 (Namco Bandai)
Sonic The Hedgehog (Sega)
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07 (EA)
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas (Ubisoft)
Tony Hawk's Project 8 (Activision)
Untold Legends Dark Kingdom (Sony Online Entertainment)

Our predictions for UK March 2007 great game additions

Gran Turismo HD (Sony)
Heavenly Sword (Sony)
Half-Life 2 (EA)
Medal Of Honor: Airborne (EA)
SingStar (Sony)
Stranglehold (Midway)
The Darkness (2K Games)
Virtua Fighter 5 (Sega)
Virtua Tennis 3 (Sega)
Burnout 5 (EA)
Colin McRae: DiRT (Codemasters)
SKATE (EA)
Haze (Ubisoft)
PES7 (Konami)



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PSM3 Reviews

Instant PlayStation justice

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50 Cent Bulletproof: G Unit Edition	98
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"Makes Black Eyed Peas bearable"

Lumines 2 page 92

PSM3 review scoring system

0-29 **Rubbish**
An absolute stinker and an insult to gaming. The makers should be ashamed.

30-49 **Poor**
Why did they do that? Some simple playtesting could have worked wonders.

50-69 **All right**
Hey it works, and we can see what they were trying to do. And that's about it.

70-84 **Good**
Worth playing, especially if you're a fan of the genre. It just lacks that touch of greatness.

85-89 **Superb**
This is the sweet spot. If a game scores in this zone it's definitely worth your money.

90+ **Amazing**
You must get this. Failure to do so would mean missing out on a real console classic.

PSM3 BUY IT

The Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

The Team

Meet our regular reviews squad

Daniel Griffiths
Specialist in Driving, action and opening the big PS3 box.
Playing *Call Of Duty 3:* "Reminds me of my own wartime days."

Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Extreme sports and Justin Lee Collins.
Playing *SSX3:* "My snowboarding chatter *really* impressed JLC."

Nathan Irvine
Specialist in Sports games and being drunk at awards shows.
Playing *Lumines 2:* "I'm starting to quite like Black Eyed Peas."

Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-players, retro, being stalked by MySpace girls.
Playing *PaRappa 2:* "I love rap. Vanilla Ice is a genius."

David Cook
Specialist in Shooters, platformers and cat scratches.
Playing *Canis Canem Edit:* "Much better than school really was."

Joel Snape
Specialist in Extreme sports, scrappers and "rocking out".
Playing *Guitar Hero 2:* "Ladies! Bow before the axe god! Ladies?"

Disagree with our reviews? Email your outraged rant to **psm3@futurenet.co.uk**

PS2

Pub Activision | **Dev** Treyarch
Price £30 | **Release** November 24
Multi-player 1-16

ON THE DISC
See *Call Of Duty 3* on the disc next month

Killing fields Set pieces can be epic in scale, with soldiers and explosions filling the screen. Your first job here has to be to get the machine gun nest in the church.

PSM3 BUY IT

Call Of Duty 3

The first casualty of war will be your nerves

KNOW IT NOW

- The most epic WWII shooter yet? ☑
- New vehicles and minigames? ☑
- Thousands of Nazis to kill? ☑
- Tom Hanks coming to save you at the end? ☒

No other shooter can play with your emotions like this. Within minutes you'll have tasted exhilaration, bloodlust, panic, remorse and fear. As the chaos hits its peak – when it seems like the bombs, gunfire, shouts and screams can't possibly get more intense – *Call Of Duty 3* nudges that strange boundary where the real world fades away. All that's left is the drama on the screen in front of you. You enter 'the zone'. You're no longer pushing buttons or wiggling analogue sticks – you're *there*. It's Saving Private Ryan, The Thin Red Line and Band Of Brothers all rolled into one. And, when the battle's won, you'll emerge from the smoke in triumphant slow motion, tilting back your helmet to wipe the sweat from your eyes. As you do, you'll be contemplating the senseless slaughter, the meaningless loss of life, and just *how damn cool* you looked when you threw that German grenade back before it exploded.

You'll get a clear taste of what's in store during the game's opening moments. After a brief base camp

Executions

You've gotta fight for your right (to live)

Don't take it personally, but the Nazis are trying to kill you. One man at a time.

1 **Surprise** No matter how vigilant you are, you can still get caught out – those Germans just love jumping out from hidden corners.

2 **Struggle** Pump the shoulder triggers as hard as you can while hitting the buttons that flash up on-screen and you can battle with the soldier.

3 **Victory** Win the fight and you'll beat the Nazi down, finally defeating him and living to fight another day. Go you!

tutorial you're loaded onto the back of a truck, to be shipped to the front line. While you're watching the road roll away into the distance, the men around you chat and shout encouragement to a latecomer running to catch up. As you settle and contemplate the battles ahead... BANG!

There's an explosion, an artillery strike. The screen is thrown into disarray, everything slows down and the sound drops to a drunken slur, filled with fearful breathing and a pounding heart beat.

The next thing you see are faces, filling your view of the sky, as you're dragged clear of the truck's wreckage. When the sound whooshes back to reality, all hell has broken loose. There are shouts, gunfire and explosions. One of your rescuers spasms and drops away as a stray bullet hits his helmet with a metallic 'dong!' Forget him, he's dead. As you get to your feet, orders are yelled - you need to clear a wall and attack the Germans on the other side. You approach its base and get a boost over the top. And *that's* when things get bad.

Hell on Earth

What happens next establishes *COD3*'s intent to mount an epic assault on both your senses and your nerves. As you clear the wall and hit the ground, a collective roar rises from the men around you as they charge. There are soldiers everywhere. Explosions throw fountains of dirt into the air. For a second, it roots you to the spot as you try to take in the size of it all. This is the first level. From that moment onwards, the carnage and thumping, relentless pressure sweeps you up like a

Squad bio: Corporal Keith

A Scottish SAS rifleman, Keith accompanies you on night missions aiding French resistance and is very loyal to his commanding officer.

European vacation You won't just be shooting at distant targets and The Hun are not pleased to see you.

Party hearty You're never alone, fighting with anything from a handful of French saboteurs to entire platoons of Uncle Sam's finest. Fall in line, soldier.

dry leaf and pitches you helplessly, headlong, into the breech.

If this was *just* a shooter then it would already be an incredible experience. But this offers so much more than that. *Black* is a shooter – you move through linear environments, you shoot stuff, end of story. Here, however, it's impressive just how much variety is on offer. Rather than simply changing environments every now and then, or rewarding you with a new gun as you progress, there's a constant parade of wide-ranging gameplay elements. Hand-to-hand fighting, driving, rowing or using a crowbar to open sealed doors... at one point you even pump the controls of a crane to drop train carriages on the enemies' heads. Take that, Fritz!

Push the button

Responsible for this diversity are the new Battle Actions – minigames and activities that appear from time to time to complete certain events. The urgency differs depending on the challenge. Planting bombs, for example, can't actually be failed. Each prompt simply hangs on screen until it's pressed. Fighting, however, is far more unforgiving. It occurs at several points, *always* catching you off guard as a soldier lunges from nowhere. Fail to pump the joypad triggers hard enough as you grapple the enemy and it's all over. One scuffle copies a famous moment from Saving Private Ryan. Failure here will see you pinned to the floor and... very... slowly... stabbed through the heart. Succeed, though, and you'll yank the pins from grenades on the Kraut's uniform, before kicking him backwards through a window to explode messily.

Even without these Battle Actions, it would still be an awe-inspiring experience.

Squad bio: Private Baron

A Canadian radio operator who usually runs away at the first sign of trouble. He eventually grows a pair, just in time to get them shot off saving the Polish.

Tanked up The armoured bits lack impact compared to the rest of the game, but they're still fun.

Take cover Smoke grenades are dead handy if you want to cross open ground under enemy fire.

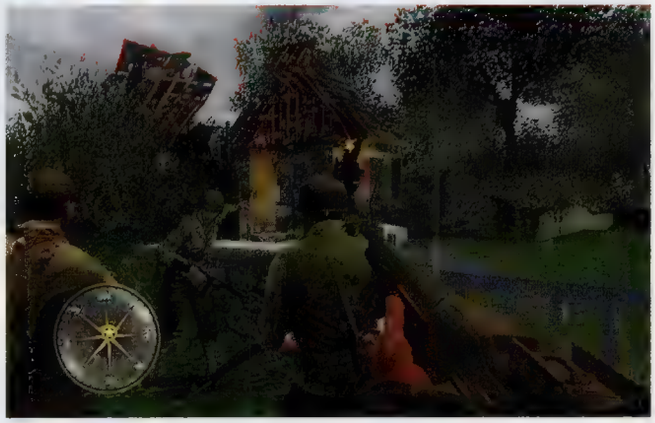
As the plot develops (covering the Allied push to cut off retreating German forces after D-Day) it constantly changes atmosphere and pace. For example, a direct contrast to the spectacular graveyard opening is a tense, hushed forest crossing. It's a nervous infiltration that has you encountering random pockets of resistance and firing at muzzle-flashes in the undergrowth.

Another stand-out moment is a terrifyingly claustrophobic sweep of houses in an occupied village or a close-up and dirty shootout in a wine cellar, with Merlot gushing from every bullet-ruptured barrel. The tension can reach incredible

Decisions

On The left... certain death

Do you want to get blown up or shot? Hey, at least now you have a choice.



Choices At points you'll have to make a choice about the path ahead. In this case you can pick between a dry river bed or the ridge above. Whatever you select splits your squad into two, with the other half taking the remaining route. Let's see what each choice brings.

The dry river bed The high walls of this gulley mean you're sitting ducks for a Germans ambush overhead. It's tough, but doable as long as you stay low and keep moving. The other half of our squad help out by attacking the Hun on the ridge above.

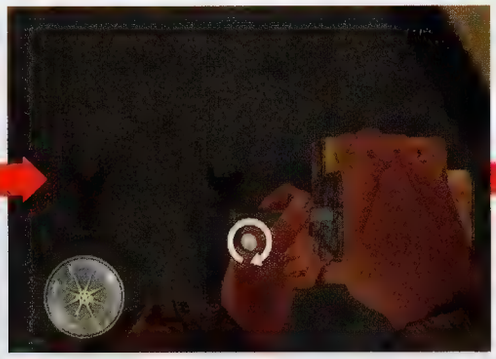
The ridge This initially seems like an easy option, especially as you can see your mates getting hammered in the gully below. But it's a false sense of security, as this route means you need to pass a dug-in machine gun emplacement.

Special Moves

Time to take action

There's more to this war than pumping triggers – check out the Battle Actions

Plant! Hold down ◎ in the right place and you can place a charge. There are various things that need blowing up, like enemy gun emplacements or fuel depots.



Prime! Once the charge is fixed in place you'll need to furiously rotate the right analogue stick in order to screw a detonator into the explosive. Careful now!

Run! With the charge primed, you need to hit one more button to pull the pin, igniting the fuse. Being somewhere else would now be a good idea. Run like Linford Christie sprinting for the bus.

Cannon At certain points you'll have to take control of a massive beast like this piece of artillery. Elsewhere there are also mortars to fire which are smaller, but just as much fun.

Aim By rotating the left and right analogue sticks you can move the barrel up and down or left and right. Point it at something you don't like and hit fire.

Enjoy Once you've run out of ammo, take a step back and inspect the many piles of molten, twisted metal and smoking human remains you've created. Worry about therapy later.

Blocked Inconveniently, you'll occasionally find a door that been sealed up by having massive planks of wood nailed across it. Someone (you) is going to have to get it open.

Lever Find a crowbar and you can pull away the planks one at a time. Just hit ⊗ to get a grip and then waggle the right stick frantically to prise the wood off, bit by bit.

Success After a bit of elbow grease, the way is clear. You and you men can now get the hell out of there before the Germans – or the door's owner – turn up.

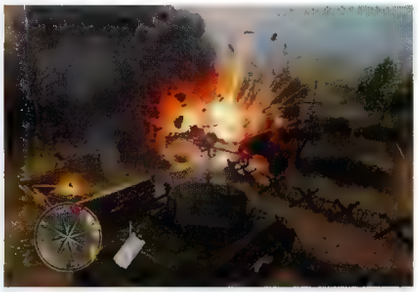
levels. We were left so strung out that at one point we rounded a corner and shot a German by accident. We just jumped and involuntarily squeezed the trigger, watching on in shock as he convulsed backwards in a spray of blood.

Jeep of faith

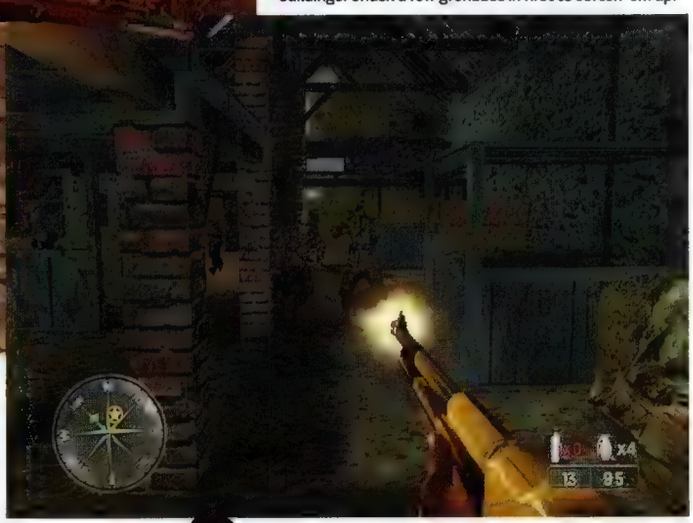
Elsewhere, you'll be helping the French Resistance sneak into train yards or driving a Polish tank in pursuit of enemy armour. There are even driving sections where you're tearing around French streets in a jeep. Okay, *Gran Turismo* it isn't, but it's still great fun as you crash through gates and mow down any Nazi that's in the way. There are also 'decision points'. Here you'll be told to choose between routes ahead, each providing a separate challenge. Take out the snipers to the left or the machine guns to the right? You choose.

One thing that stands out in comparison to previous instalments is the far more coherent plot. The last games were content to jump from one conflict to the next, almost at random, leaving you disorientated and unconnected to the events as a whole. This time there's one goal – closing something called the Falaise Pocket, a bottleneck through which the entire German army is retreating. With it shut, millions of Nazi troops will be cut

Team play Your team are useful useful to have around, fighting back and throwing grenades.



Wham bam Explosions look great, belching flames, smoke and vaporised German tank crew remains. Mmmm, toasty



Barn to kill You'll need to clear Nazis from occupied buildings. Chuck a few grenades in first to soften 'em up.

off, effectively be removed from the war and giving the Allies a huge advantage.

Story time

Every mission – whether playing as British S.A.S., American or Canadian troops, or a Polish tank crew – intertwines the effort to seal the Falaise Pocket. As a result there's a greater flow and momentum to the story. Event 'A' leads into offensive 'B', making the jumps between one level to the next far less jarring. It also helps that the cast are a colourful bunch, believable companions without lengthy back stories or character development. And knowing the people you're fighting with adds loads of depth to the crowd-filled battles.

There are a few let downs. The frame-rate can get choppy occasionally, but it's forgivable given the amount of on-screen action and it's not a crushing problem. The blurry, near-death slow-mo effect is slapped on pretty thickly at times as well, diminishing its impact. And the tank levels, while fun, can be underwhelming. Compared to the frantic action of the on-foot battles; the armoured conflicts can feel a little bare, as you mostly face enemy tanks one at a time. And the button-bash Battle Actions while fun, are a little daft.

But if parts feel weak it's only because of *COD3*'s strengths overall. There are moments of pure adrenaline, where you lose sight of anything beyond the battle. Best of all, the warfare never settles into a rut. One minute you're invincible, taking on an advancing horde single handedly. The next moment it's pure heart-thumping terror as you vulnerably fire panicked bursts into overwhelming enemy waves. Few shooters can provide such an exhilarating and as diverse experience as this can, making it an unmissable piece of World War 2 adventure. **Leon Hurley**

Squad bio: Isabelle

Isabelle is in the French Resistance. She's the nearest thing to totty you'll meet, but don't make wedding plans. It doesn't end well.

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Call Of Duty 3* contains...**

Intense action | Unbelievable battle scenes
Huge amounts of variety | Frame-rate issues

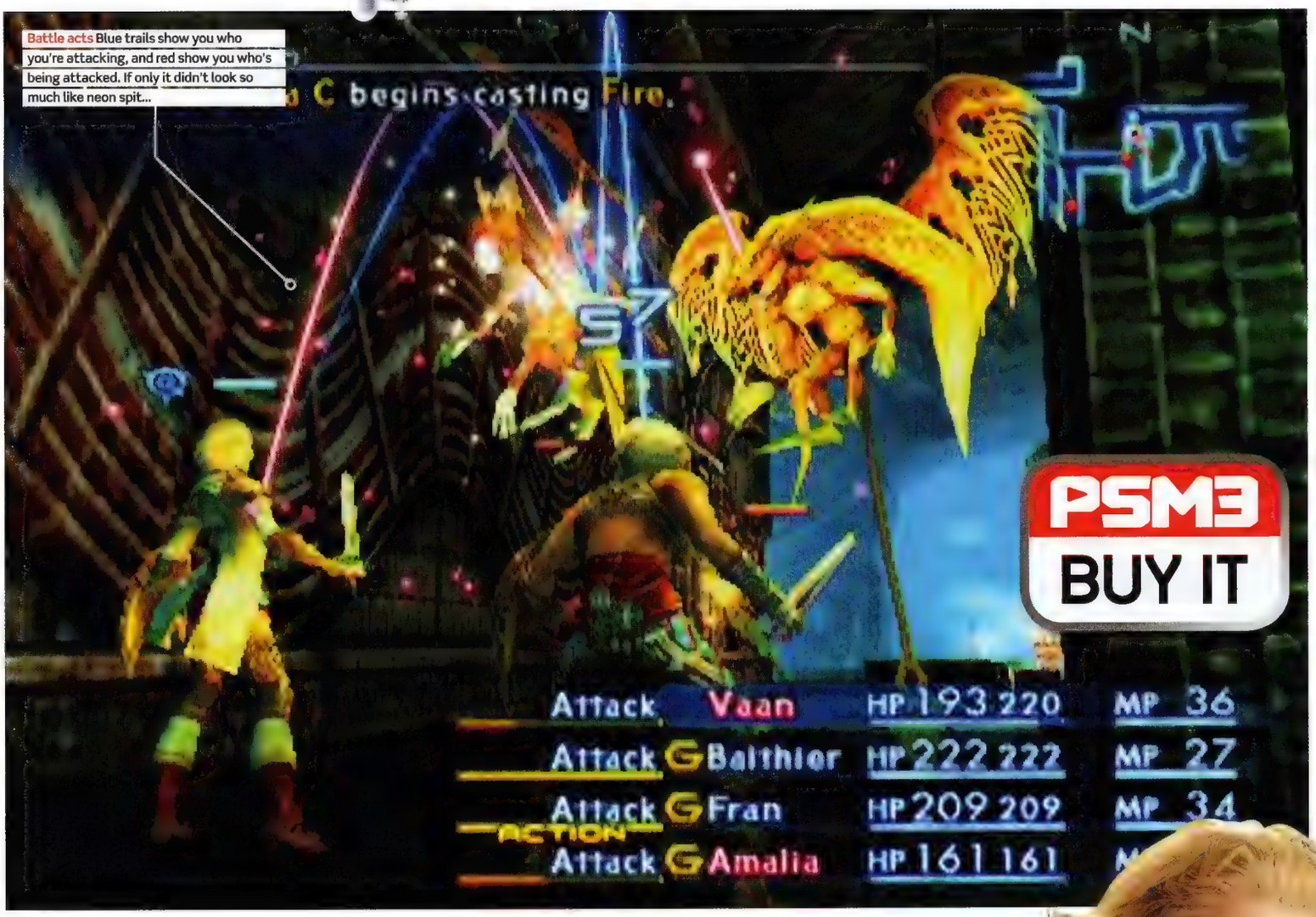
Overall Grabs you by the collar and keeps delivering. Up there with *Killzone* and *Black* for best FPS on PS2.

88

PS2

Pub Square Enix | **Dev** Square Enix
Price £40 | **Release** January 26
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC


Battle acts Blue trails show you who you're attacking, and red show you who's being attacked. If only it didn't look so much like neon spit...
C begins casting Fire.
Attack Vaan HP 193 220 MP 36
Attack Balthier HP 222 222 MP 27
Attack Fran HP 209 209 MP 34
Attack Amalia HP 161 161
ACTION

PSM3 BUY IT

Final Fantasy XII

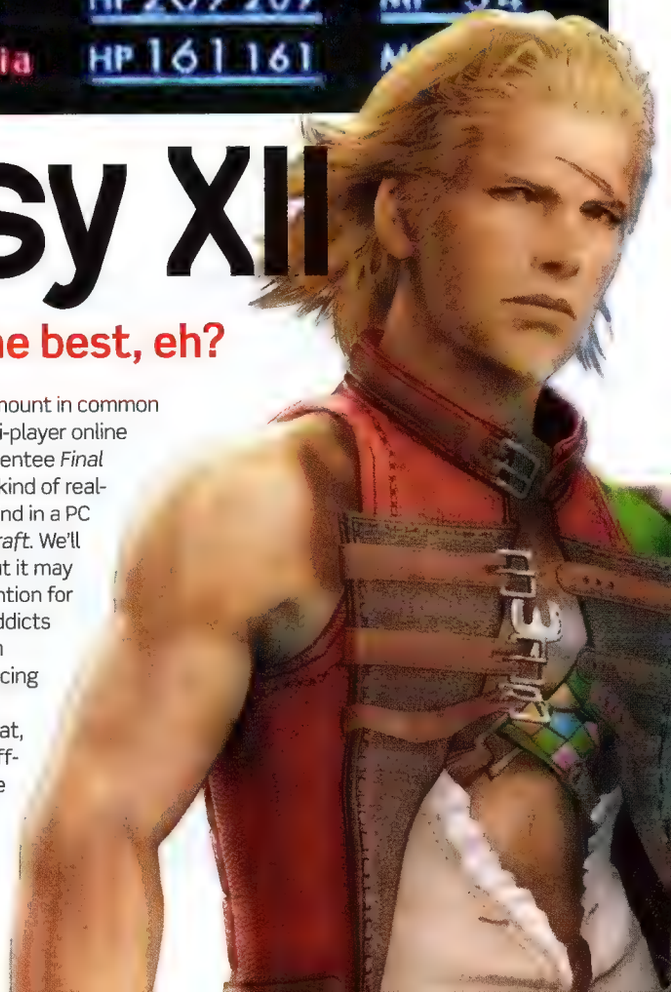
Definitely the last one for PS2. Good job it's the best, eh?

KNOW IT NOW

Real-time combat and loads to explore? ☑
Any character able to use any weapon? ☑
Teen tantrums and moonlight kisses? ☒
Night vision and hiding behind things? ☒

RPGs are notorious for their ability to take over people's lives. *Final Fantasy XII* has gone one step further than that – the game's director, Yasumi Matsuno, left Square Enix last year, either due to health issues or having been asked to resign, depending on who you talk to about it. Either way, it's hard not to see *Final Fantasy XII* as the game capable of breaking its creators, and Square Enix's patience – and after playing it, you'll see why. It's a game with a *soul* – by which we mean (less wankily) almost everything about it is rendered with artistry and utter class. Or, even less wankily, it looks bloody gorgeous, is an enormous achievement and plays unlike any other *Final Fantasy* RPG ever made. Well, ever released in the UK...

It's got a surprising amount in common with the massively multi-player online RPG and UK-release absentee *Final Fantasy XI*, offering the kind of real-time-ish combat you'd find in a PC MMO like *World Of Warcraft*. We'll come back to it later, but it may well be a bone of contention for those long-serving *FF* addicts who are used to random battles and the line-dancing rhythm of turn-based fights. And, on top of that, there may be another off-putting aspect for those who want their *FF* games to be the same as the last one, but

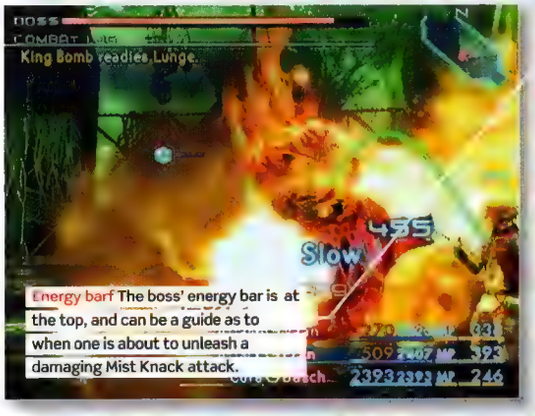


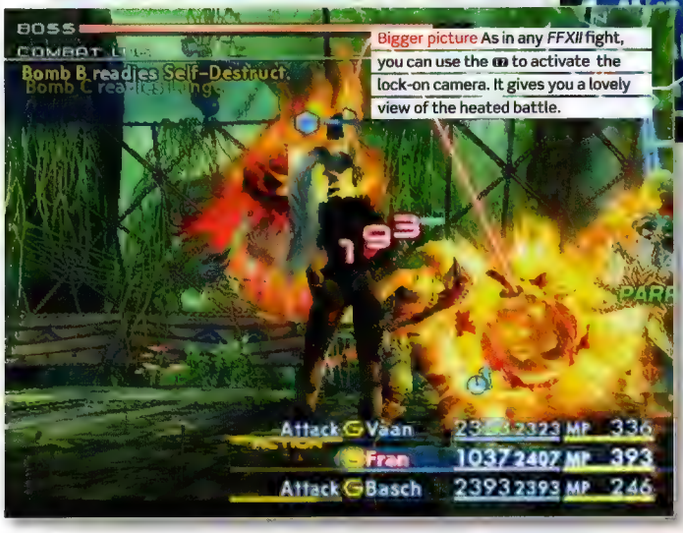
Encounters

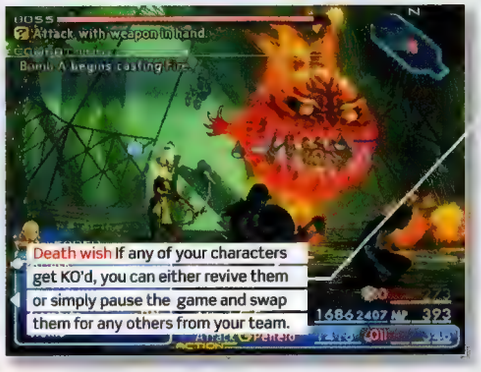
Boss Nova

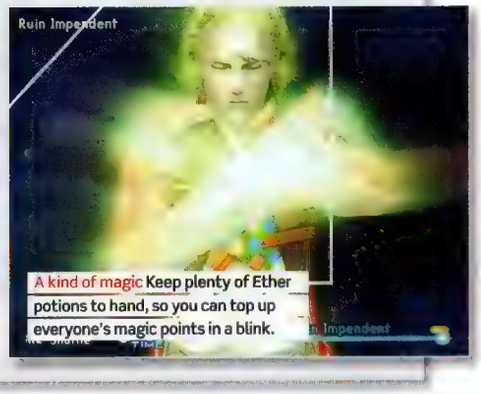
Battles not for the faint-hearted...

If you're not putting in the overtime and pushing the capabilities of your team to the limit, then *FFXII*'s bosses will crush you like a wafer biscuit beneath the treads of a tank. If you like your RPGs to be smooth sailing, then you'd best not dip your toes in the stormy waters of a showdown with one of *FFXII*'s potent ultra-bastards...


King Bomb readies Lunge.
Slow
Energy barf The boss' energy bar is at the top, and can be a guide as to when one is about to unleash a damaging Mist Knack attack.


Bigger picture As in any *FFXII* fight, you can use the to activate the lock-on camera. It gives you a lovely view of the heated battle.
Bomb B readies Self-Destruct.
Attack Vaan 2323 MP 336
Fran 1037 2407 MP 393
Attack Basch 2393 2393 MP 246


Attack with weapon in hand.
Death wish If any of your characters get KO'd, you can either revive them or simply pause the game and swap them for any others from your team.



with new characters: the story. The lengthy opening cut-scene is typically beautiful and luxurious, but just as bleak. Lots of people die and the story quickly becomes muddier than a Welsh caravan. Depressing? Not at all. If anything, it's a refreshing change from the GCSE melodrama that most RPGs are happy to pass off as a plot. Messy? Hell, yes. The bad guys aren't pure evil and the good guys aren't saints; hardly anyone in *FFXII* has a clean CV as far as karma goes. We would elaborate on the finer details, but there's just no room suffice to say that its dark and complex plot is told stylishly via the in-game cut-scenes. Rendered with enormous attention to detail, when characters speak their faces and bodies say just as much as their gobs, to stunning effect. Some of the westernised voice acting may feel a bit weird to begin with, as it draws on so many accents to provide dialogue for its mix of races, from Icelandic to cockney English. It starts out feeling like a culture clash, but it'll soon grow on you. And it helps that the script is well written – totally grown-up and unafraid to use big words if they apply.

Looking good

Visually, it's just as excellent, as rich with detail as you'd expect from a top-flight Squeenix RPG, but a far cry from the cartoony, cake-and-jelly looks of the publisher's last two great adventures, *Kingdom Hearts 2* and *Dragon Quest VIII*. It's rugged as hell, but still bright and beautiful – Moogles and Chocobos have never looked so vivid,

Welcome mat

Often, you'll have four people in your group instead of three, thanks to guests who join you. They'll happily take any orders, mind, the spineless bums.

while other races, such as the bunny-eared Viera and the troll-like Seeq, are stunners. Towns are full of people and the environments are huge, which is no small feat since they're actually there to be explored, and not restricted to some invisible, pre-rendered corridors for you jog through. They're packed with secrets and hidden creatures, and virtually all areas are designed to be revisted, featuring daunting enemies or caves you'll have no choice but to run from first time around.

As far as combat goes, you *can* play *FFXII* as a purely menu-driven experience, if you like, pausing the action and directing every single move of your three-strong team. Scraps are seamless – you can see all the enemies around you, and choose to avoid them – and use time-dependent action meters along with blue/red trails that 'spit'

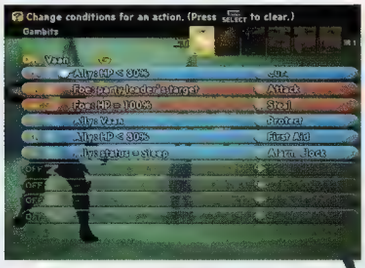
Masterclass

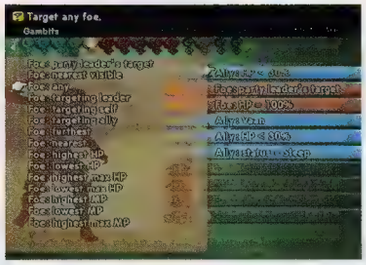
Final FAQtasy

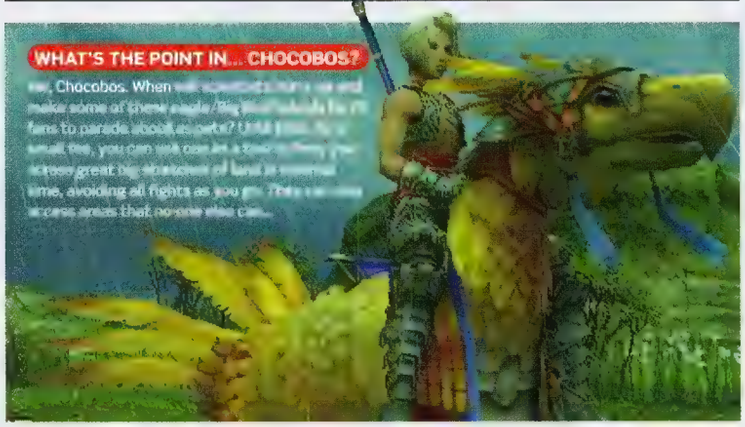
Run a bath, take the phone off the hook and get stuck in to this lot...

WHAT ARE... GAMBITS?

Gambits are a set of commands you give to your teammates, so they don't need to be mollycoddled. The system can get complicated, but it's simple to start using well – for example, set everyone to heal any teammate with HP <30% (to keep everyone alive), followed by the order to attack the nearest enemy, then use HP <90% as your least important protocol for topping up after each tussle. The possibilities are immense, very useful and allow you to implement a ton of different strategies.





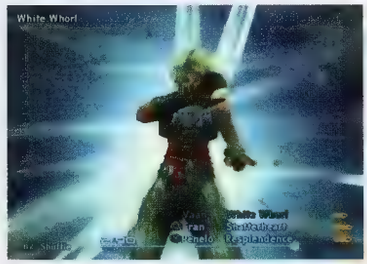


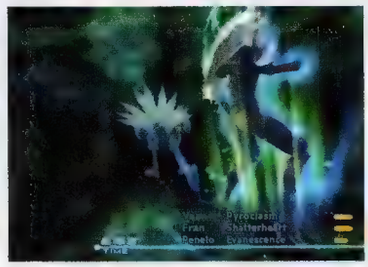
WHAT'S THE POINT IN... CHOCOBOS?

...Chocobos. When ... and make some of these eagle-like ... fans to parade about in, eh? Uh? Yes. Is a small fee, you can ... across great ... time, avoiding all fights as you go. ... across areas that no one else can...

LICENCE POINTS? EH?

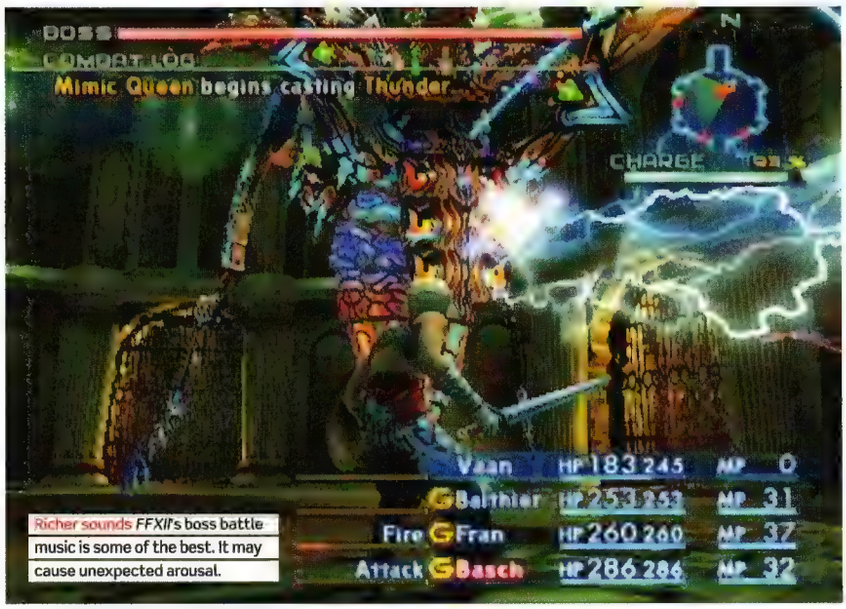
OK, so the Licence Board looks intimidating, but it's great – you use points gained by defeating enemies to unlock new skills, upgrades, spells, equipment and weapon abilities. It means you can develop any character however you like – to be a melee badass or a spellcasting champion, or both; ultimately, all characters will be able to use everything, from axes to guns to Arcane-category spells.





WHAT THE HELL ARE... QUICKENINGS?

Special attacks, these. You'll find them scattered around the Licence Board, and each character can learn up to three of them. They'll use up all your magic points, but you can chain Quickenings between characters to really put the squeeze on a near-death boss. It's recommended you get some Quickenings as soon as possible, as they'll double and then triple the number of magic points each character has – an invaluable upgrade, whether or not you bother with the attacks themselves.


BOSS
COMBAT LOG
Mimic Queen begins casting Thunder
CHARGE
Vaan HP 183 245 MP 0
Balthier HP 253 253 MP 31
Fire Fran HP 260 260 MP 37
Attack Basch HP 286 286 MP 32

Richer sounds *FFXII*'s boss battle music is some of the best. It may cause unexpected arousal.

Das loot

You don't get money from battles – you get loot. This is then sold to merchants, with the bonus of special items becoming available to buy.

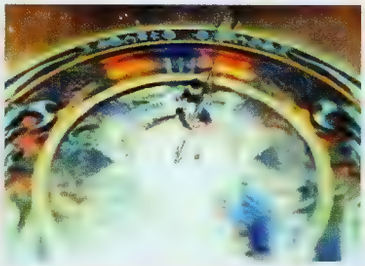
between you and your enemies to show who's attacking who. It takes hardly any time to adjust to, and makes for the feeling of exploring a detailed, believable world instead of simply a sequence towns and dungeons. And then there are the Gambits (see Final FAQtasy), a bravely complex idea for such a mainstream RPG, that allow you to 'program' your team to look after themselves – you're always in control, but never have to babysit. It's brilliant and means that fights can zing along at an exciting and unruly-looking pace, always giving you the option of total control.

Easy does it

Plus, it's a game that, largely, loves you and wants to take some of the inconvenience out of RPGing – save points restore your team completely, while your magic points recharge as you run around, meaning there's rarely any need to keep running

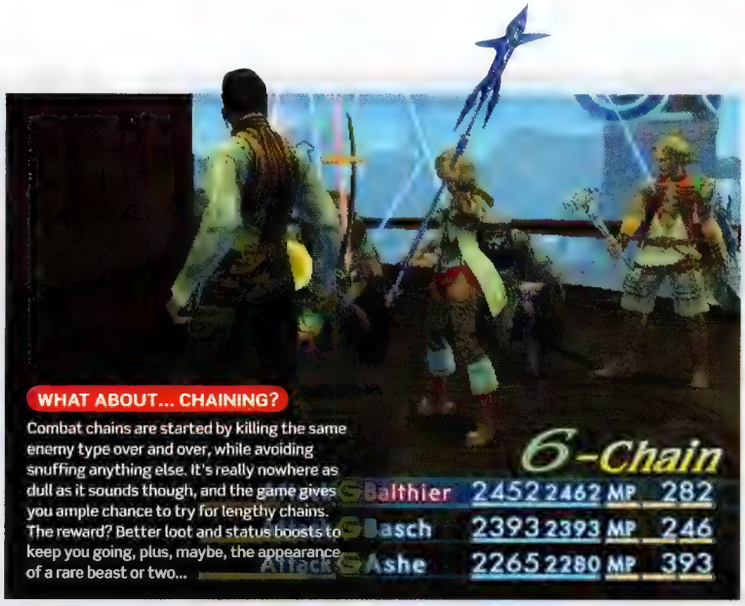
Final Fantasy XII

"Whatever you do in 2007, playing *FFXII* should be your new year's resolution"



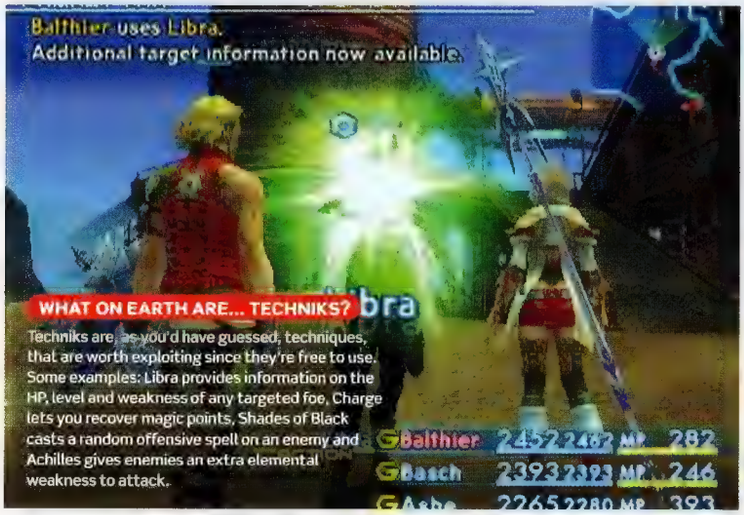
WHAT DO I DO WITH AN... ESPER?

These bad boys are your typical *Final Fantasy* summons, incredibly powerful creatures you can conjure up to use in battle. As well as a range of hard-hitting 'regular' attacks, each one has a super-destructive special to call upon, often accompanied by a lengthy but spectacular bit of cut-scene goodness. You'll have to earn them by defeating them – there are 12 in all, half of which are hidden, and are as hard to beat as frozen Marmite. It's worth the effort, though, as they're mighty useful in a messy battle.



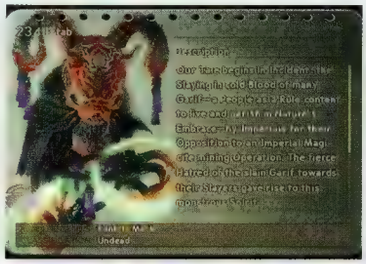
WHAT ABOUT... CHAINING?

Combat chains are started by killing the same enemy type over and over, while avoiding snuffing anything else. It's really nowhere as dull as it sounds though, and the game gives you ample chance to try for lengthy chains. The reward? Better loot and status boosts to keep you going, plus, maybe, the appearance of a rare beast or two...



WHAT ON EARTH ARE... TECHNIKS?

Techniks are, as you'd have guessed, techniques, that are worth exploiting since they're free to use. Some examples: Libra provides information on the HP, level and weakness of any targeted foe, Charge lets you recover magic points, Shades of Black casts a random offensive spell on an enemy and Achilles gives enemies an extra elemental weakness to attack.



SHOULD I BOTHER WITH HUNTS?

Hunting is the ideal way to earn extra experience and loot when you're trying to toughen up your team in preparation for a demanding boss fight. There are a number of places where you can pick up contracts, which lead you to finding out where a particular unwanted creature is lurking, and track them down in return for some cash and goodies. You'll improve your standing with the Hunter's Guild, too.

back to the shops to stock up. And then there are Licence Points (again, see Final FAQtasy), which allow you to develop each character as you like, but without any restriction on how you'd like to develop them later in the game. But there's some cruelty here, too, and it's probably the most off-putting facet of *FFXII*: you *will* get lynched by the game's bosses unless you put the extra hours in and forge your team into a well-oiled, brutally powerful squad of killmungous co-operation. But that's hardly a downer if you really want an RPG you can get your teeth into, right up to the gums, but aren't afraid of it biting back.

Rex effects This isn't a boss, but you'll often encounter enemies of this size while freely roaming the game world.

FFXII's only just been released in the US, but is due to hit our shores in early 2007 (fingers crossed the lovely limited edition makes it across, too) and, when it finally arrives, you're in for an engrossing treat. It's everything you expect from a *FF* game – epic music, enormous boss showdowns, an engaging but not overly complex combat system and handsomely dressed characters – but also everything you'd expect from a great adventure. It ripples with magic and a sense of exploration, and its environments feel like real, physical places and not just pre-rendered wallpaper. Whatever you decide to do come 2007 – give up Mars bars for breakfast, be more in touch with your emotional side while doing twenty sit-ups a day – playing *FFXII* should be your first New Year's resolution. Then, come 2008, your new one could be to actually finish it. **Steven Bailey**

PSM3 Verdict

***Final Fantasy XII* contains...**

Fantastic music | Flappy clothes | Challenging bosses | 100 hours of your future life

Overall An outstanding RPG. It's unmistakably *Final Fantasy*, but feels as fresh as any adventure on PS2.

94

PS2

Pub Red Octane | **Dev** Harmonix
Price £30 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
Hear us review *Guitar Hero 2* on the disc next month
PS2/Reviews

Note perfect Notes look cleaner and sharper, and it's easier to pick out hammer-on opportunities (the white ones) against the background.

PSM3 BUY IT

Guitar Hero 2

Take the stage for the greatest encore we've ever seen

KNOW IT NOW

A set of 40 licensed rawk tracks? ☑
24 tunes from unsigned bands? ☑
A replica of Stonehenge? ☑
Ability to play without looking daft? ☒

Confession time: we can't play *Guitar Hero* on Normal mode any more. Yeah, you read that right: not 'don't', but 'can't.' Other games? Yeah, sometimes we like them easy. But in *Guitar Hero*, Normal just doesn't give us that buzz; that twitchy jolt of adrenaline that comes when your conscious brain shuts down and your fingers fly over the plastic. Orange notes are our drug, and we've been desperate for a fresh fix for months.

OK, we'll explain. Play on Normal in *Guitar Hero* and you're strumming along to a watered-down, low-fat version of whatever song you've picked. Chunks are missed out of runs, notes are ignored and – because Normal never uses that orange button – your hand never moves. Until you start playing on Hard you aren't really playing at all: that's when you're forced to play virtually every note in the song and make tricky chord progressions like a real guitarist. It's when you need to start using hammer-ons and pull-offs – which have mercifully been made easier this time around. It's also when you start to notice subtleties in songs you haven't heard before, and when you start to dream in button combinations. It's a beautiful experience, every bit as good as racing a perfect lap or doing a double flawless in *Tekken*. Some people, of course, will tell you that you'd be better off practicing the real guitar. These people are idiots.

Hard to beat

Why is the difficulty so important? Well, because the best change in *Guitar Hero 2* is its Practice mode. In the last game, you'd often ace the early riffs of a song only to come a finger-mangling cropper on an extended solo ten seconds before the end. Even if you managed to muddle through with a well-timed blast of star power, you wouldn't actually be able to play the solo – just survive it. Because you'd only get the chance to practice it once in five minutes of play and the notes just blur past in certain songs – think No-One Knows – sometimes you wouldn't even be able to work out what was going on, so you'd never get any better.

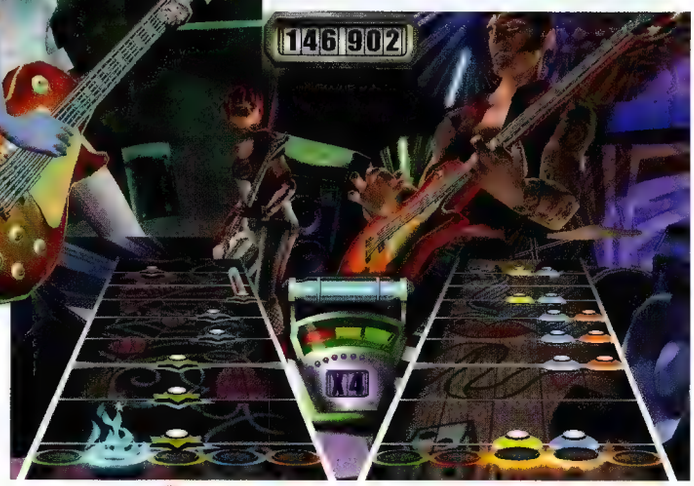
This is not a problem in *Guitar Hero 2*. Instead of just slapping in a never-fail option, Red Octane have included a comprehensive Practice mode that lets you loop any part of a song – verse, chorus,

Guitar Hero 2

"It's ridiculous and pointless to criticise – *Guitar Hero 2* is absolutely brilliant"

Hand solo There are 12 characters – our favourite remains '70s slickster Xavier Stone, though.

One more time Play your four set list songs well enough, and you'll earn the chance to do an encore.



bridge or solos – and strum until it's hard-wired into your hands. If a solo's proving particularly challenging, you can slow it down to one of three speeds, then build your way up until you're rocking the plastic frets like a Vaseline-smothered Eric Clapton. It might sound like a minor change, but to serious players it's huge – suddenly, hitting the magic 100% on Expert sounds almost feasible, and frustration is eliminated at a stroke. Expect every other game to implement a similar mode soon.

The other, more frequently-mentioned changes for *Hero 2* are bass and rhythm sections for co-operative play. These give songs yet another dimension: unless you're a decent musician, we'd practically guarantee that you've never noticed how good the bass section is in Sweet Child O' Mine. Playing together's a whole new experience: suddenly, you're forced to hold your bit of the action up when the lead guitarist fumbles a tricky riff, and whoop "Star Power!" for synchronised power-up activation. Our only complaint is the lack of a co-op career.

Tracks of our tears

Problems? Well, for what it's worth, we're not quite as keen on the new tracklist as we were on the old one. It's telling that our most-played songs are the Stray Cats and the Top Gear theme, and there simply isn't a punk tune on here that's quite as memorable as Infected or Fat Lip. What *Guitar Hero* always does well is introducing you to new songs – and making you realise that you actually quite like KISS – but the selection here just isn't quite tight enough for our liking.

Strike a pose Song-specific animations mean AC/DC-style posing and the classic machine-gun pose if you use Star Power on War Pigs. Class.

Really, though, it's ridiculous and pointless to criticise: *Guitar Hero 2* is absolutely brilliant. This isn't *SingStar*: the joy of twiddling through a difficult solo is a reward in itself, whether you like the song or not. The first night we got it, we thought one of us had got carpal tunnel syndrome from playing it too much. Christ help us when we have to start playing on Expert mode just to get our kicks. **Joel Snape**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Guitar Hero 2* contains...**

That song from the start of Pulp Fiction
Frenzied plucking | Three-button chords

Overall Addresses every critiscism and packs in a load of new stuff. A masterclass in sequel-making.

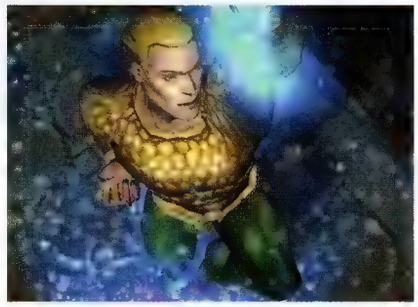
92

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Snowblind Studios
Price £30 | **Release** November 24
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
See this reviewed on our disc next month
PS2/Reviews

Hero we go Two players can control a character each. Do Bats and Supes look camp or what?

Flash in the pan Shooting about at lightning speed and confusing enemies as The Flash is fun.



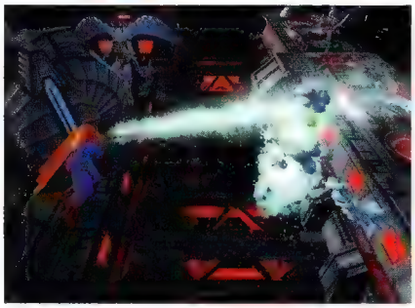
Sea here This is Aquaman. He can talk to the fish. Maybe he sleeps with them, too. Who knows?

Justice League Heroes

Shouldn't superheroes be *exciting*?

There's only one thing better than a superhero and that's an entire *gang* of superheroes. The Justice League were formed in the '60s and they've been saving the world ever since, thwarting the nefarious plans of countless villains including time-bending alien Brainiac and the ruler of planet Apokolips, Darkseid, both of whom appear in the game.

The League's key members are Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, Green Lantern, Zatanna – you know, the sexy female wizard – and Martian Manhunter, and they're all playable in *Heroes*, each coming with a unique set of skills. Unfortunately, however, the game isn't the cinematic action epic it really deserves to be – it's a slow-paced action RPG from the developers of *Champions of Norrath* and *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*, and it has so much in common with those games that it feels like a sequel – but with superheroes. Everything from the combat to the level design and even the way the water ripples when you touch it are the same as in its fantasy predecessors.



Heroes to zeroes

The first level sees you in control of Batman and Superman as they battle through a city taken over by evil robots. Superman can fly and use his laser eyes to zap the metal lumps, while Batman can float around with his cape and twat them with his batarang. But it's here that the game's first major problem becomes apparent – the heroes can only use their powers for a short period of time before they run out of energy. *What*?! Would Superman's powers really *run out*? Not unless he'd just eaten a kryptonite sandwich, no. It's just stupid.

But get past the game's lame logic and you'll find a perfectly functional RPG-lite.

Grodd above **The Flash's arch-nemesis is Gorilla Grodd, an ape with telekinetic powers. Obviously.**

Experience points can be used to upgrade each characters' skills and you can collect Justice League badges – earned by saving civilians and the like – that unlock classic costumes and characters like Hawkgirl and Huntress.

But – and you knew a 'but' was coming – the game is deathly bland. *Dark Alliance* had side-quests to keep things interesting, but *Justice League Heroes* is just a series of battles in uninspired, lifeless levels. It's also incredibly hard to get into as your characters start out weak, meaning you have to spend ages levelling up just to actually feel like a superhero. There's no justice. **Andy Kelly**

PSM3 Verdict

***Justice League Heroes* contains...**
Loads of classic DC heroes | Simple RPG elements | An evil psychic monkey

Overall Being a superhero should be *exciting*, not a drab slog through a series of boring corridors, right?

48

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Pub THQ | **Dev** Pandemic
Price £30 | **Release** Out Now
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
Expect our review of *DAH2* on the disc next month
PS2/Reviews

Okay, I've blasted my way through to the Cryptography
Distract-O-Meter
Russian around This is Natalya.
She's on your side – or is she?
That suit looks a bit tight, love.

Destroy All Humans 2

A change of scene for Crypto, so how about a change in gameplay too?

KNOW IT NOW

- More B-movie style human slaughtering? ✓
- An appearance by Giles from Buffy? ✓
- Tours of Japan, Russia and Great Britain? ✓
- Radically different to the previous game? ✗

How you should approach *Destroy All Humans 2* depends on your attitude – do you enjoy simply having more of a good thing? (And *DAH*, for all its flaws, was a good thing indeed.) Or do you consistently seek new experiences and get bored if you've seen something before? If you're in the former camp, you'll love *DAH2*. If you're in the latter, you should avoid it like a pack of angry gibbons.

Because, make no mistake, *DAH2* is an almost pixel-for-pixel reworking of the first game, but with psycho alien Crypto running around the late '60s instead of the late '50s. Out go the Rat Pack lovers and carnival queens of the original and in come the hippies, but other than that, it all feels horribly familiar. OK, there's the odd new attack method – like the Dislocator, which sends people and vehicles flying through the air entirely at random, or the ability to drop meteor showers onto your targets' bonces – and there's a new plot, involving said hippies, some mutants and the Cold War (with an appearance by Anthony Head, aka Giles from Buffy) – but this is more like *Destroy All Humans 1.5*.

Déjà vu to a kill

So while there's nothing fundamentally wrong with the game, if you've played the first you'll know *exactly* what you're going to get. There are some missions where you're instructed to simply blast everything on foot, some in which you hop on board your flying saucer and blow up everything beneath you, and some stealth jobs. Here, as before, you adopt the guise of a human – this time known as 'bodyjacking', as you actually become the person you target, rather than just altering your appearance to look like them – and scan people's minds for clues as to where to go next. This, as previously, means you have to listen to unfunny line after unfunny line, and if we wanted that we'd watch My Family.

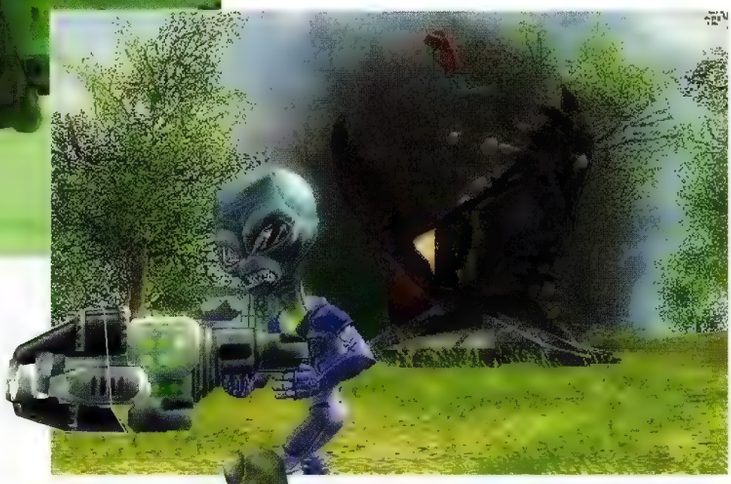
Speaking of unfunny things, the dialogue is oddly lacking in sparkle. What stood out in the first game was the banter between main characters, which fizzed like a sherbert and Coke cocktail. This time, we found ourselves skipping chunks of it. The polish seems to have gone from the writing and this robs you of the impetus to carry on with the game. Which – and we don't want you to forget this amid the huffy negativity of these paragraphs – is still fun.

Destroy All Humans 2

"As in the first game, your AI companions can be as thick as concrete soup"

Big air You can use your psychic powers to fling people and items around. Very entertaining it is too.

Ups and downs Your saucer can now – wait for it – ascend and descend. This doesn't make the spaceship bits entirely different.



Mutant and Dec There are capsules dotted around which contain a gas that turns humans to mutants. Best destroy them, eh?

You see, *Destroy All Humans* certainly hasn't suddenly stopped being enjoyable. We still relished picking up cars and people with our magic brain powers and hurling them through the skies, we still enjoyed exploring the large, sprawling landscapes – this time round, including London, Siberia and Tokyo, among others – and we still had a good time blasting all-comers to bits with our selection of daft weapons. There remains lots to see and do (and there are loads more side-missions than previously) – it's just, unfortunately, stuff that we've already seen and done before. Sure, there are other tweaks – you can now kidnap different types of people with your saucer and gene-splice them together to create different power-ups, for example – but the game plays in exactly the same way, meaning it suffers exactly the same faults.

Artificial stupidity

As before, some missions see you fight alongside an AI companion and, as before, they can be as thick as concrete soup. One early mission sees you in your saucer, attempting to blast tanks out of the path of Natalya the saucy KGB agent's car – but will she drive *around* the charred remains of the army's finest? Oh, no – she'll just sit there, being bombarded, until you move the debris with your abduction beam. Worse, in a boss battle in the tunnels beneath London, we defeated a mutant beastie simply by standing in one place and holding fire while it busied itself staring at a particularly interesting spot behind a pillar. Just to confirm this wasn't a one-off, we tried it again – with the same results

If you've got the original *DAH*, don't get this unless you're an absolute Crypto devotee. If you haven't, this is definitely worth playing – because for all we've griped about it, it's still very good stuff. But it's a sequel made with so little thought about actually *advancing* the series that we can't help but feel a bit cheated. **David Cook**

Time to split There's a two-player split-screen mode for twice the carnage. It's somewhat chuggy, but player two gets to wear a dashing red catsuit. Smart.

Fave Feature

"Chucking people through the air is still a laugh"

PSM3 Verdict

***Destroy All Humans! 2* contains...**

The same stuff as *DAH1* | Giles from Buffy Wonky AI | Glorious telekinetic powers

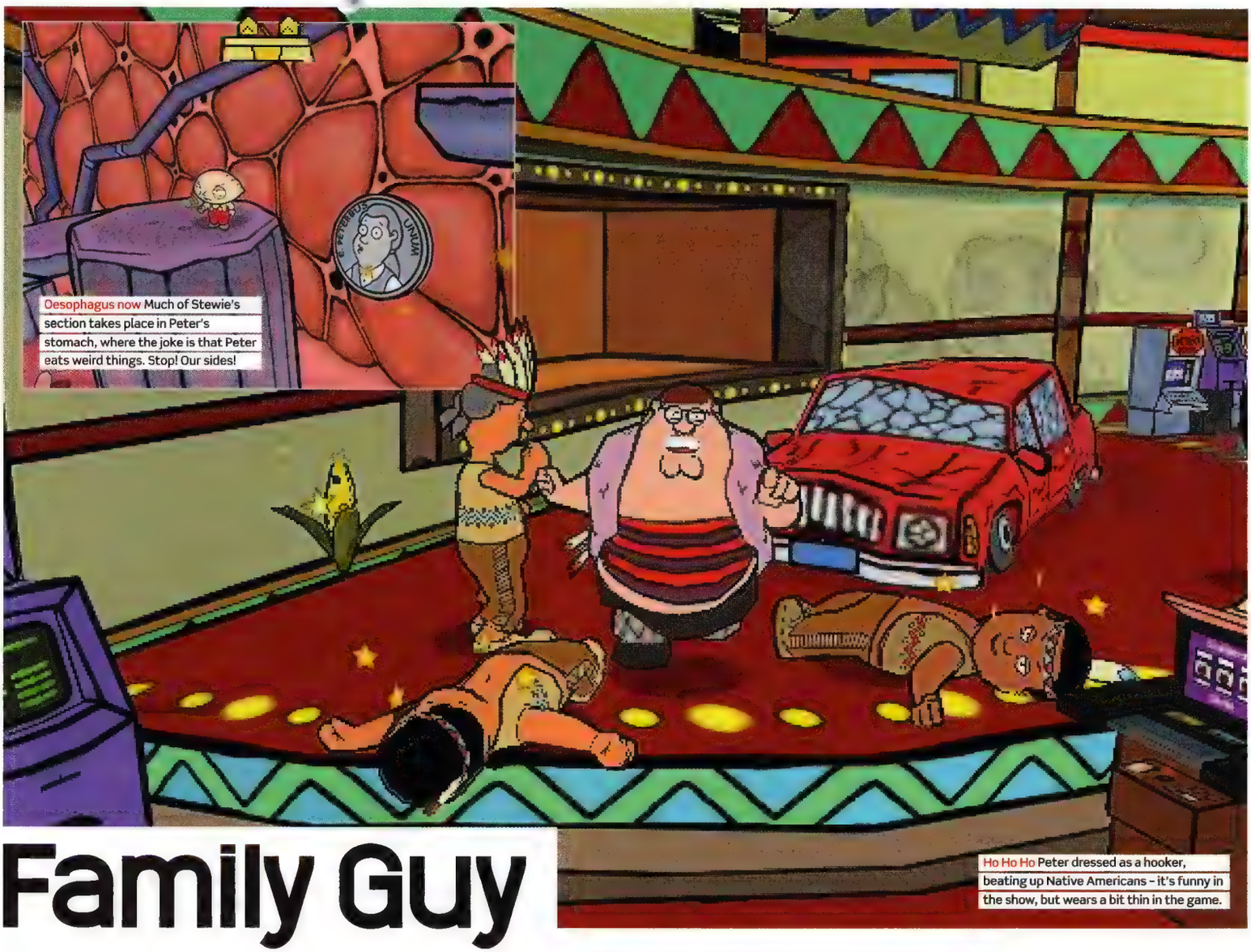
Overall Suffocatingly familiar. Excellent if you haven't played the original, disappointing if you have.

73

PS2

Pub Take Two | **Dev** High Voltage
Price £30 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
We'll be reviewing *Family Guy* on the disc next month
PS2/Reviews



Oesophagus now Much of Stewie's section takes place in Peter's stomach, where the joke is that Peter eats weird things. Stop! Our sides!

Ho Ho Ho Peter dressed as a hooker, beating up Native Americans – it's funny in the show, but wears a bit thin in the game.

Family Guy

Whose leg do we have to hump to get a decent cartoon conversion?

KNOW IT NOW

A special appearance by Adam West? ☑
Sections for Brian, Stewie and Peter ☑
Jokes only fans of the show will get? ☑
Intelligent, mature and sensible? ☒

First cancelled, then resurrected, now more shameless than ever, Family Guy overtook The Simpsons as best-fat-idiot-cartoon on TV about two seasons ago. Trouble is, Seth MacFarlane's MTV-attention span show doesn't seem like the best candidate for the joypad treatment. Incest gags? Racial stereotypes? Jokes about Margot Kidder that we actually had to look up on Wikipedia to 'get'? It seems like development suicide. And it is.

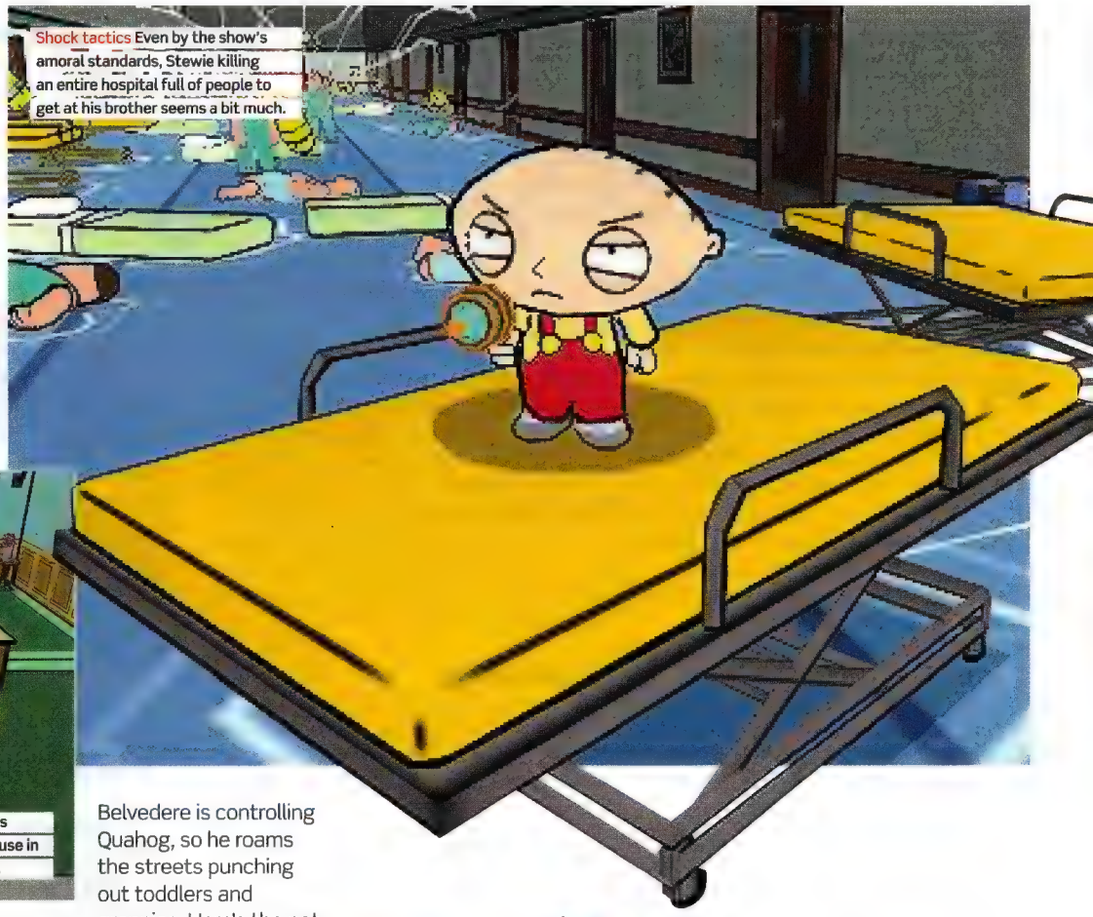
First things first, though: is it funny? Well, sort of. Most of its one-liners are nicked directly from the series, so you'll have heard nearly all of them before. The upside is that you'll also recognize all the sight gags, of which there are dozens: from the evil monkey in Chris' closet to Meg hanging out with her roadkill 'boyfriend' at the morgue. The game's full of nudge-wink moments that'll be totally incomprehensible to non-fans: from the child-eating candy tree to the long-armed guy tickling a midget. In one bizarre scene, Stewie has to steer Peter's dad, Cleveland and the Greased-Up Deaf Guy into the erogenous zone of Peter's mind so that his single braincell can turn them into cheerleaders and increase the blood flow to his spuds. In the next, he's battling hundreds of Lois clones, all dressed in lingerie and karate suits. Get it?

Flashback to the future

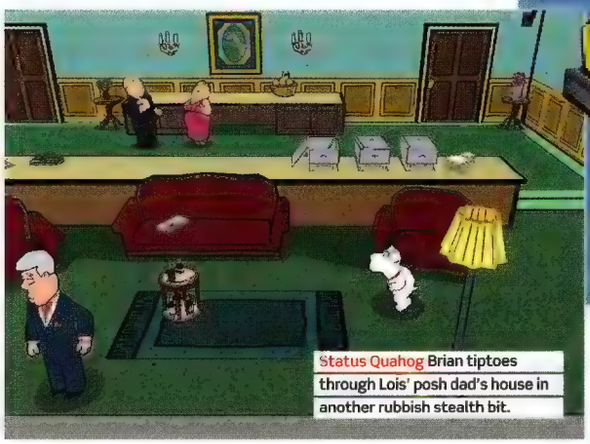
The show's trademark flashbacks are turned into ten-second minigames, so you might suddenly be transported, mid-level, into one of Stewie's sexy parties or the time Brian got into a fight with Abraham Lincoln. There are also generous dollops of the show's ridiculous sense of humour – knock a pointy hat onto a police officer and his mates will burn him as a witch. And in case you were wondering, it doesn't pull any punches just because it's a videogame – in one section, you bounce on pregnant ladies' stomachs and make them give birth to mutant babies. Ick.

Is it fun? Well, no. Stewie's sections are the most tolerable: decent platforming punctuated with the occasional stupid swimming bit. Stewie also gets a mind-control device, so he's in charge of cameos from secondary characters: from scaring nurses with moon-chinned pervert Quagmire to, um, killing nurses with Death. Second best are Brian's stealth sections: but that's only by default. Disobeying the first law of non-frustrating videogames, they don't make any sense – sometimes you'll be spotted by a cop at a near-impossible angle from behind a table, but at others you'll be able to run straight past

Afro to hell Fans will love in-jokes like this scene here, but people new to the residents of Quahog will be left cold.



Shock tactics Even by the show's amoral standards, Stewie killing an entire hospital full of people to get at his brother seems a bit much.



Status Quahog Brian tiptoes through Lois' posh dad's house in another rubbish stealth bit.

Belvedere is controlling Quahog, so he roams the streets punching out toddlers and grannies. Here's the not-so-funny bit: he's useless. Every enemy only responds to one attack – children and dogs have to be kicked, adults have to be punched, normal cops have to be headbutted and special forces have to be hit with a sweep. Do anything else, and it won't affect them, even if the attack connects – they'll just stand there punching away at your face.

him in full view. So, because it all feels so random, there's no real satisfaction in completing these bits – you just survive them to see the next joke.

Worst of the lot, though, are Peter's beat-'em-up sections. Here's the funny bit: Peter thinks obscure US sitcom butler Mr

Stage war Classic scenes from the show are here, like Peter's odd production of The King And I.

Bertram raid

If you've seen the episode Emission Impossible, you'll recognise Stewie's nemesis and 'sperm brother' Bertram. He's the main villain in this dodgy license.

Scrappy scrapping

Not only does this make no sense – why wouldn't a kick affect an adult? – it makes the game almost impossible, since any crowd is likely to contain two or three different types of opponent and therefore can't be hurt whatever you do. Peter's sections are also the shortest on gags so there's little to distract you from the tedium of being killed by babies because you were trying to headbutt them instead of using the kick.

Ultimately, it never feels like you're playing *Family Guy* for the fun of it – you're simply enduring some god-awful game design in the hope that the next bit's going to be funny. Please, people: no conversion of American Dad.

Joel Snape

PSM3 Verdict

***Family Guy* contains...**
The occasional chuckle | Bad taste
Stupidly frustrating gameplay

Overall You could suffer in the hope of a smirk or you could just buy the DVDs. Giggity-goo! Etc.

43

PS2

Pub Vivendi | **Dev** Krome Studios
Price £30 | **Release** Out Now
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC

The Legend Of Spyro A New Beginning

He breathes fire, but Spyro still leaves us cold

And so returns one of PS2 platforming's least memorable characters. Yes, more forgettable than Tak. Anyway, although this latest instalment comes eight years after his first outing, *A New Beginning* attempts to rewrite Spyro's history – with the voices of Elijah Wood, David Spade and Gary Oldman.

When calamity befalls the Dragon Realms, Spyro's egg is saved from certain destruction by the wise dragon elder Ignitus who sent it floating down the river. When he is found by a family of dragonflies, Spyro grows up believing himself to be a rather large dragonfly. When he starts breathing fire, his adoptive parents tell all and Spyro promptly sets off on a trek across different lands to find his true home, showing a distinct lack of gratitude to the flies that brought him up. Kids, eh?

Spyro battles enemies using a mixture of his flame-breathing abilities and melee attacks, both allowing the Purple One to perform complex combos (including a time-slowing Matrix move). Jewel-collecting also returns, complete with classic side effects. Each colour of jewel corresponds to a different aspect: red jewels restore health, green replenishes Spyro's fire-breathing – and the gems also serve to boost his attacks or unlock new powers.

Spyro naff

While some aspects of the game are obsessively detailed, such as the individual names given to all the enemies, other areas are lacking. Sparx, Spyro's 'comedy' sidekick, is a pointless annoyance and the boss battles quickly become frustratingly hard and repetitive. On the plus side, you finally learn Spyro's origins (well, we're sure *some* of you care) and the Hollywood cast are given a good script. The between-world flight stages are genuinely engaging, too, and make a welcome change from the repetitive 'fight, kill, move on' strategy of the main game.

Fan the flames
Dragons don't just breathe fire, you know. Spyro can exhale electricity and zap anything in range. Look, just go with it OK?

A New Beginning tries to redeem the franchise from past failures while also trying to recapture what made the games such a success on PSone. It succeeds in part, but doesn't invoke the necessary nostalgia and the difficulty level can be off-putting. Still, this is pitched at the right level to excite existing fans, may entice newbies to the series and, while it's hardly awe-inspiring, it's passably entertaining. But why settle for that when you could be playing *Ratchet 3* instead? **Lesley Smith**

PSM3 Verdict

***The Legend Of Spyro* contains...**
Gorgeous in-flight levels | Stunning slo-mo combo attacks | Names for every enemy

Overall The franchise is somewhat redeemed – sadly the levels are repetitive and some bosses just too hard.

63

Dragon on *Spyro* looks suitably attractive, but it's all a bit dull. Ho hum.

The bigger they are... There are loads of huge enemies, but they're not exciting to fight.

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DRAGON BALL Z
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RED STEEL

POKÉMON!

CALL OF DUTY 3!

PS2

Pub THQ | **Dev** Yukes
Price £35 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-4

ON THE DISC
See *Smackdown 2007* in action next month
PS2/Reviews

WWE Smackdown vs. RAW 2007

New *Smackdown*, new controls, same niggly flaws...

KNOW IT NOW

A brand new control system? ☑
Ken Kennedy doing his own intro? ☑
An updated roster and storylines? ☑
All of *Smackdown*'s old problems fixed? ☒

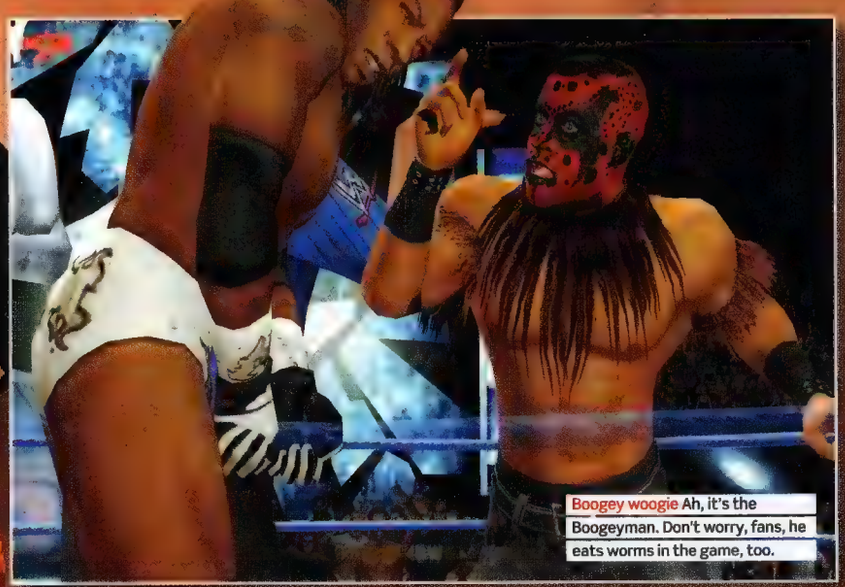
Although there are many changes to *Smackdown* this year, the one that sticks in our heads most is how *weird* the wrestlers' mouths have become. You can see how oddly wrong they are by glancing at Edge over there, but it's most apparent just after a failed pinfall, at which point they all pull a frustrated grimace and chomp their lips together flappily in the pained expression of a dog who's just stuck his nose in a patch of stinging nettles. It really is very odd.

Anyway. Having spent the last couple of years bemoaning the lack of change in WWE games from year to year, it's something of a shock to find that this time around it's actually had a bit of an overhaul.

Out goes the vaguely-mechanical button-jabbing and in comes a *Fight Night*-esque system utilizing the right stick. While the face buttons are still used for basic jabs and punches, get into a grapple situation and a flick of the right stick will unload a hip-toss, a suplex, a jab to the eyes or whatever. Click R3 during a grapple and you'll get access to the strangely-named 'user-controlled' grapple moves

Cool Move

As ever, you can store up your Finishing moves with L1 and R2, and unleash them later with R1. Here's Edge about to spear John Cena. Look at him there, mouth agape and flapping in the wind. This is gonna hurt bad.



Boogey woogie Ah, it's the Boogeyman. Don't worry, fans, he eats worms in the game, too.

Decorating

Pimp My Locker Room

Now you can jazz up your dressing room with a selection of 'fashionable' items

Load of bass It's a huge fish. Wrestlers *love* fishing. Everyone knows that. Yes.

Light up Strip lighting? Pah. What the grappler about town needs is a *whacking great chandalier.*

Skull of Kintyre Yeah. A cow skull. That'll really make you feel at home, won't it?

Deer me Perhaps wrestlers really enjoy hunting. We'd love Melina to handle our pump-action. (Sorry.)

Water way to go This is one of those waterfall things, not a mirror. Trés chic, non?

Table manners Bleurgh. A *lime green* coffee table. Covered in wrestling magazines. Tasteful.

Randy? Savage Randy Orton decks Batista, both of whom are better this year than last.

– these are your more showy, powerful manoeuvres (powerslams, neckbreakers and so forth) – and can punish your opponent further. Finishers continue to be applied with L1.

And it works well, offering up scrapping that feels rather more fluid than before. It takes a little time to get used to – it took us ages before we were reeling off user-controlled grapple moves fluently – but once you do, it feels entirely natural.

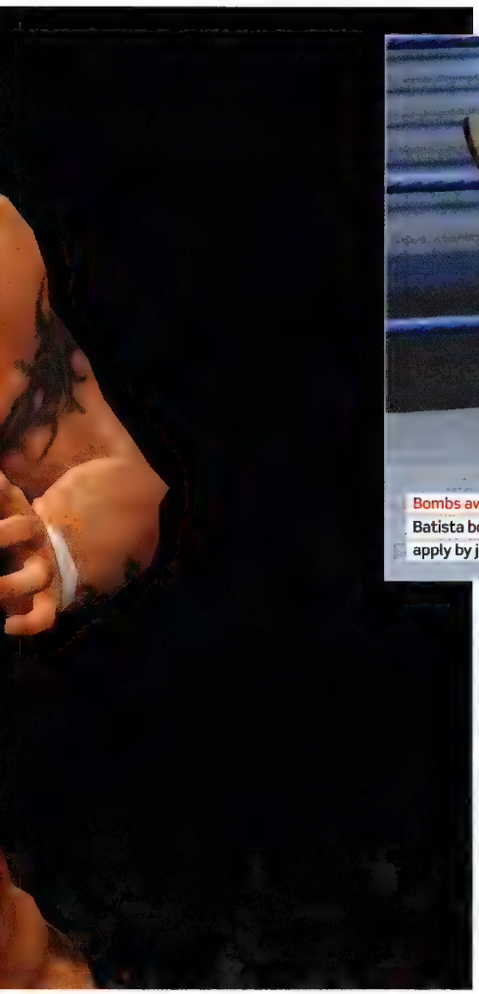
Out of stamina

Unfortunately, last year's accursed stamina system survives – although now mapped onto ◎ rather than SELECT, which is marginally more sensible – meaning every time your wrestler gets a bit tired, you have to stop and hold down the button until he gets his breath back. This, again, leads to farcical situations every two minutes where both fighters will be having a bit of a punch-up, but then get a bit wheezy and have to retreat to opposite sides of the ring for a rest. The poor lambs. We said this last year and we'll say it again: this is a *game*, THQ, not a sim. It doesn't *need* this cack-handed approach to realism. While this sort of thing happens occasionally in 'real' wrestling to heighten the drama it's got no place here.

Other new stuff? There's the dressing room redecoration option – see the box on the left – a fleshed-out Management mode with loads of proper stats and the chance to hire scriptwriters to make your wrestlers' feuds more popular with the viewing public there are new Season storylines, the ability to nick weapons from the crowd, an updated roster (but one that feels a bit slim as there are loads of minor wrestlers not present) and better commentary. This year, the King and Jim Ross (or Michael Cole and Tazz) even acknowledge the wrestlers in the ring by name, which doesn't sound much but is an immense improvement on the genero-commentary of the last few years. They also offer facts and insight too. Create-a-wrestler mode, meanwhile, is as in-depth as ever, allowing you to create any number of freaks – our first experiment created an overweight dwarf with blue skin, pink hair, a red suit, horns and giant monster feet.

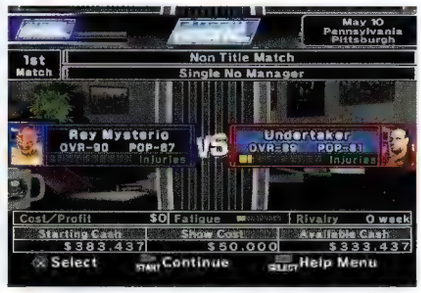
Out for the count

But. For all the new things going on in *Smackdown 2007* the series' faults haven't been corrected. Again. The AI, again, is far from stellar – the amount of times our opponent approached our downed bodies



Bombs away Booker T feels the Batista bomb, a finisher you can apply by jabbing ⓞ.

Who's the manager? Management mode remains surprisingly addictive, and offers far more stats now.



Diva up The divas are here again, of course. Lita's breasts have 34% more polygons this year! (This may not be true.)

menacingly before wafting a steel chair apologetically through the air above our heads is obscene. Also, in tag team matches, it's still not out of the question that your partner might freak out a bit in the scrum and start beating you up instead of your rivals. Sticking with tag bouts, if both your opponents happen to be in the ring at once, you can almost guarantee at some point you'll wind up attempting to attack the wrong one and, while you can correct that with a button press, the disorientation inevitably results in your face getting stamped on.

More? Well, there are still times when the game forgets what depth is, meaning you can step off the announcer's table (or the platform where the coffin in kept in Buried Alive matches) straight onto the floor, without ever actually dropping downwards, which just *looks shoddy*. And it's quite possible to win fights, especially in two-player mode, by knocking your opponent down and just applying submission move after submission move. Then, of course, there's that cocking stamina system...

Open and shut case

Only one new match type this year, the Money In The Bank ladder match. Get a ladder set up, grab a briefcase hanging from the ceiling, earn a title shot. Job done.

We ended last year's review of *Smackdown* by saying "to keep us interested, a revolution really is in order next time". And it's sort of got one with the new controls, which we certainly like, but this is a partial reinvention – it still feels as if we've seen it all before. We don't mean to sound like we're picking on *Smackdown* – certain other franchises stagnate far more each year than this – but it's frustrating because we desperately want it to make that leap from 'good game' to 'great game' and it simply never does. We predict great things on PS3. Until then... **David Cook**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Smackdown 2007* contains...**

Different controls | New sweaty men | The usual problems | Umaga | Weird mouths

Overall The new controls merely paper over the same old flaws – but, ultimately, it's still compulsive fun.

80

Pub Konami | **Dev** Konami
Price £35 | **Release** December 1
Multi-player 1–2 (Wi-Fi)

ON THE DISC
See Pro Evo running on PSP next month

K-its real Young Roonus uses his strength to burst powerfully past two defenders in his beautifully recreated Man United kit.

Postman Pat France's Vieira delivers a power drive from a distance. C'ést trés bien.

Pro Evolution Soccer 6

Konami bring out the big guns for the new season on PSP

KNOW IT NOW

The best football simulation on PSP ☑
Licensed Man Yoo and Arsenal ☑
Wider camera angle for greater precision? ☑
D-pad suddenly much more comfortable? ☒

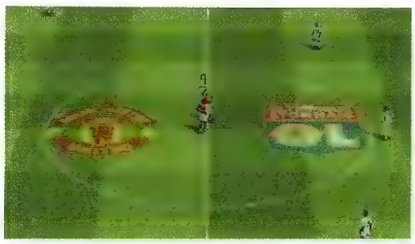
The joy when Seabass first announced *PES5* was coming to PSP was fairly short-lived. After only a few minutes of banging the ball about on the small-screen pitch a fair few problems became obvious. For a start, even the furthest back camera angle was too close to the players. Then there was a strange motion blur when sprinting or turning quickly. And, most disappointing of all, there was no Master League. What were Konami thinking? It was, well, OK – but felt soulless in comparison to *PES* the way we love it. And so Konami went back to the drawing board. For *PES6*, they've sent the cameraman back a few steps to give you a wider view of the action and the shadowy motion blur silhouettes have vanished. But there's still no... nah, only kidding, Master League has made it in as well. Yeah!

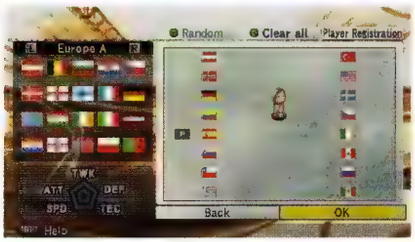
With all the changes, *PES6* on feels much better than last time out. Aside from the horrible PSP nubbin trying its hardest to spoil things, controlling your players is more responsive than in *PES5*, so taking off on mazy runs and leaving the opposition in your wake is less of a chore and more of a highlight, just like it should be. Shots from distance look a lot classier as the wider viewpoint allows for a more focused sight of your target, plus goalmouth scrambles are as random and exciting as on PlayStation 2. The only features PSP lacks are the Online mode (it's just Wi-Fi as usual) and the Random Selection match generator. This is more than made up for by the fully-functioning Master League, mind you. Everything is in there that you'd expect, although the cross-platform dream of continuing your PS2 journey over to PSP – and vice-versa – has been left out. No matter, there's still the player development, transfer system and pre-match tinkering to get to grips with. This means you can maintain an assault on the European Masters Cup below your desk when you should be doing the accounts and the like. Honestly, Konami could single-handedly cripple work productivity across the country with this feature.

Silence isn't golden

It's not all good news, mind. Back on the pitch the atmosphere is as raucous as a funeral procession. Without the ramblings of Brackley and Brooking, matches feel deathly quiet – except for a tinny cry of "It's a goooaal!" delivered at a decibel almost exclusively audible only to dogs. Ouch. Also, the slow-down that appeared in congested areas in *PES5* has sneaked into *PES6* again too. This can mean sticky situations while taking corners or free-kicks. But then again, the loading times have been trimmed by a few seconds.

Other PSP features? Well there are six leagues to play through, including the Premiership (or – sigh – 'England League') and the Italian Serie A. You've got the usual selection of cup modes including the International and European championship and the new Reebok Cup, which is a





Match power There are so many tournaments and leagues to play through you'll be kept busy for ages.

Tricky situation Ronaldinho's tricks are harder to pull off with the PSP stick than on PS2.

straight knockout tournament for clubs and nations alike. Plus you can still transfer edited information from PS2 to PSP via a USB lead, just like last season. And, while it's not the most noteworthy option here, you can turn on Battery Save mode, which does exactly as you'd expect by turning the crowd noise, music and certain sound effects off – making the atmosphere even more muted in the process.

Although playing *PES6* on PSP still hurts your fingers and thumbs over prolonged periods, it still stands out as the must-have footie experience on the machine. Visually, it's stunning – there's no finer feeling than watching your little lifelike Rooney run riot in his crisp Man Yoo kit, plus the tweaked animations allow you to twist and turn the opposition with devastating effect. And with its array of new game modes – most notably the Master League – *PES6* has more than enough reasons to come back for more. You'll never choose it over the PS2 version, but it's more than enough reason to take a PSP away on a long journey. Cheers Konami, we've just about forgiven you for the disappointment of *PES5*. But only just. **Nathan Irvine**

Mastered league

The Master League in *PES6* is a godsend. Everything you'd expect is here to play with. Great.

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Pro Evoution Soccer 6* contains...**
Headers and volleys | Detailed players and kits
Lots of modes | An empty commentary box

Overall It's by no means perfect, but *PES6* is the best footie game on PSP and is essential for fans of the series.

84

Pub Sega | **Dev** Sega
Price £20 | **Release** Out Now
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
Love Sega? See the PSP version in action right now. Don't you?

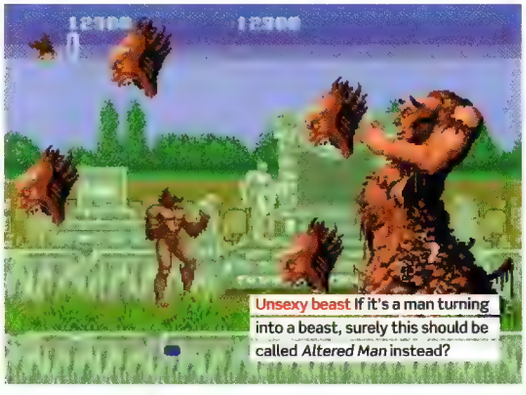
Sonic boom Ah, *Sonic 2*. The best *Sonic* yet, which is a shame given how ancient it is actually is.

Sega Mega Drive Collection

All Sega's console classics in one massive package

This isn't the first time Sega have reheated their classics. Back in PSM72, *Sega Classics Collection* on PS2 scored a 'whopping' 41%. It had *OutRun*, *Golden Axe* and *Space Harrier* among others – but for some reason Sega tried to polish the visuals and tamper with the gameplay in a bid to bring them – kicking and screaming – into the future. So thank Jeebus that *Sega Mega Drive Collection* doesn't suffer the same fate.

Most of the best titles from Sega's age-old machine are present and, thankfully, unaltered. And what a great set of games it is. Just take a look at the list of titles over there and you'll soon remember the fun times you had before everything went 3D. And for newcomers, there's a feast of 16-bit treasures for you to discover. From the superb *Sonic 2* (the best one) and *Shinobi 3* to little-known gems like *Kid Chameleon* and *Comix Zone*, there's loads of fun to be had. But for every *Golden Axe* there's a loathsome *Ristar*. And yes, it's got *Virtua Fighter 2* but it's the pish-poor 2D Mega Drive version that's best forgotten.


Unsexy beast If it's a man turning into a beast, surely this should be called *Altered Man* instead?

More for your money

And *Sega Mega Drive Collection* comes with a selection of extra games too. You unlock titles like *Super Zaxxon and Space Fury* by completing different levels from the main games, although admittedly they're not exactly Sega's finest moments. You even get a hunk of interviews to watch like the one with *Sonic* designer Rieko Kodama. Oh, and the trailers to *Phantasy Star Universe* and *Virtua Fighter 5*. If you feel like it.

Thanks to the uncomplicated controls and hours of simple gameplay, this Sega selection sits perfectly on PSP and it marks the way forward for retro compilations. We've come to accept that publishers will forever try to cash-in on their old franchises with shameless *Rehash Edition*, but if they deliver games that are as fun today as they were in their prime, without tampering with them – like *Sega Mega Drive Collection* – then we're all for it. See, we *do* like retro games sometimes. **Nathan Irvine**

Ninja skills Retro games are far more difficult than today's offerings. You'll need to be *really* good to finish these.

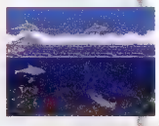
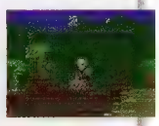
Pole-axed We didn't realise how difficult *Golden Axe* was. Better call in a mate via Wi-Fi to help out with this one.

Contents

That games list in full...

It's packed to the rafters

Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle
Altered Beast
Bonanza Bros.
Columns
Comix Zone
Decap Attack
Ecco the Dolphin
Ecco: The Tides Of Time
Ecco Jr
Flicky
Gain Ground
Golden Axe
Golden Axe 2
Golden Axe 3
Kid Chameleon
Phantasy Star 2
Phantasy Star 3
Phantasy Star 4
Ristar
Shinobi 3
Sonic The Hedgehog
Sonic The Hedgehog 2
Super Thunder Blade
Sword of Vermillion
VectorMan
VectorMan 2
Virtua Fighter 2

PSM3 Verdict

***Sega Mega Drive Collection* contains...**
2D action | Legendary classics | Sonic interviews and trailers

Overall Everyone will find something among this bunch to get giddy about. Excellent in terms of quality *and* quantity.

78

Pub Sega | **Dev** Backbone Entertainment
Price £30 | **Release** December 1
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
Like old-school Sega? See *Sega Genesis Collection* now
PS2/Latest

Shadow, man Oh, it's Shadow. We really hate Shadow and don't think we should suffer alone, which is why we've printed this picture really big. Enjoy!

Sonic Rivals

Old-school *Sonic* with a twist! A heart-breaking, near-ruinous twist...

We've been banging on for ages about how the only *Sonic* games that really work are the proper classic 2D ones – and *finally* Sega have listened. Yes, you can now get *Sonics 1* and *2* on the *Sega Mega Drive Collection*. Hurrah! Meanwhile, you can also get *Sonic Rivals*, which is so close to being glorious 'proper' *Sonic* it hurts. But it isn't.

Sure, it may *look* three-dimensional, but it's 'trick' 3D – you simply hold down → and sprint along and Sonic will take care of any movement in and out of the screen himself (rather like the ancient *Klonoa*) leaving you to take care of jumping over obstacles and battling your rivals.

Ah, yes, the rivals – the twist in this game is that you have to race an opponent to the end of each level, firing weapons or leaving traps for them. This is problematic for two reasons – firstly, because it means we have to hear from Sonic's punchable friends too much (Sega, look, apart from Sonic himself, all these characters are hateful – *really* – and we *especially* mean new boy Silver the Hedgehog) and secondly because the weapons system doesn't really work.

Power-ups and downs

Dotted around are power-ups that both you and your rival can collect. There are speed-up stars (the most useful by far), energy bolts to blast your opponent with, ice cubes you can drop to freeze your trailing rival... lots, really. Except they're only really of use when you know the level layout, which of course you can only do when you've failed numerous times. Otherwise, you can only guess at the best time to use some items – where to use traps? Where to use your blast weapons to ensure your shots don't just cannon into a wall around the bend? When best to employ the ring-collecting magnet power-up? You can't *possibly* know until you've failed three or four times. Couple this with the fact that no matter how badly you race, your opponent always remains oddly catchable – and that regardless of how well you perform, your rival never seems to be far behind – and it all feels a bit half-baked.

Rivals need friends Wi-Fi mode works well. Providing both players know the tracks, they can make intelligent, tactical use of the power-ups.

At the same time, though, *Rivals* is essentially a 2D *Sonic*, which means it's often fast, furious and fantastically exciting. And it looks absolutely lovely. Yet the 'rivals' idea feels like something that was conceived at the planning stage but not really thought through, and it becomes a lead weight around Sonic's spiky neck. Can we please just have proper *Sonic* game next time, Sega? *Please?* **David Cook**

PSM3 Verdict

***Sonic Rivals* contains...**
A concept that doesn't quite work | Trick 3D
Blistering pace | Sonic's truly awful mates

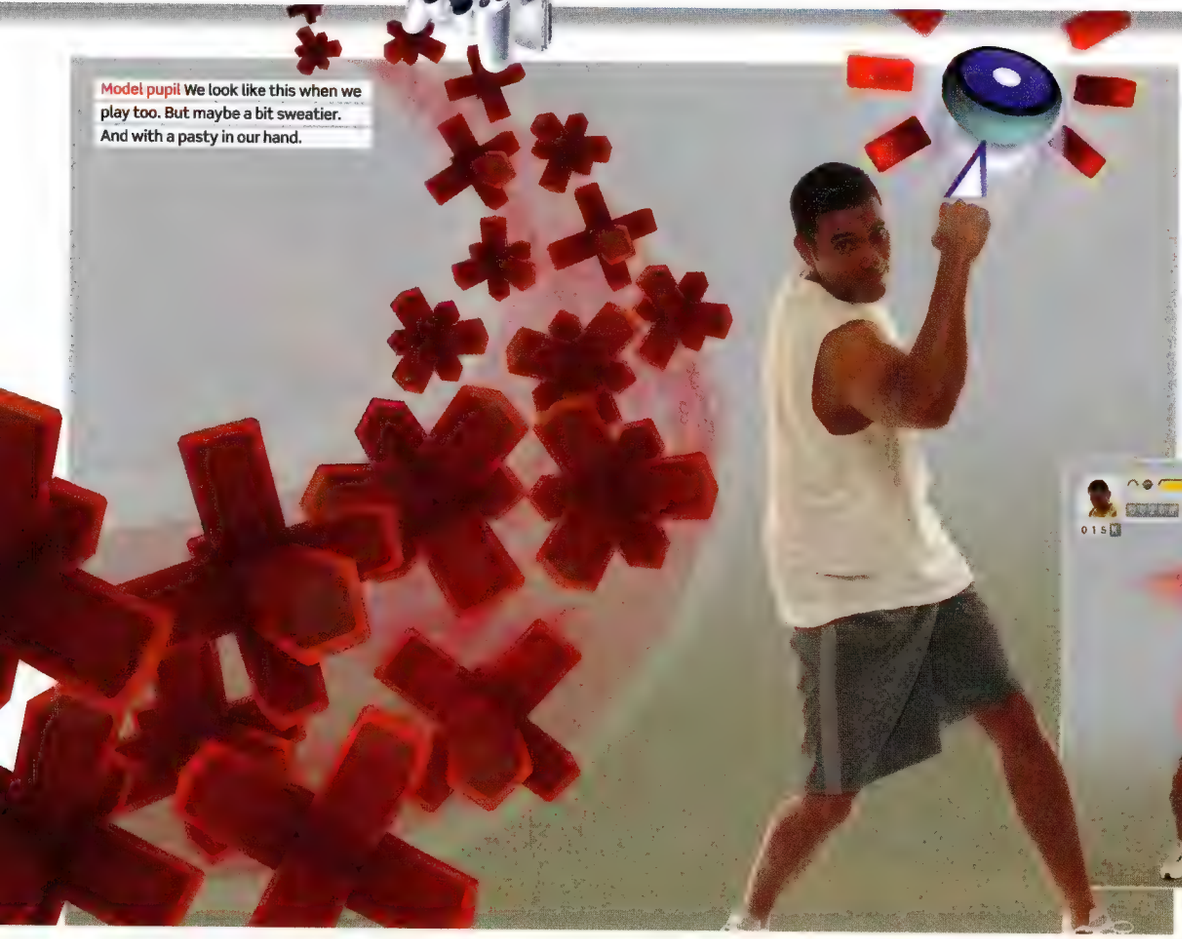
Overall Often good fun, but the fudged *Rivals* idea kicks the purity of standard *Sonic* square in the onions.

65

PS2

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony
Price £30 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
Check out us looking stupid in our review next month
PS2/Reviews



Model pupil We look like this when we play too. But maybe a bit sweatier. And with a pasty in our hand.

Chuffing hell EyeToy turns your trumps into clouds of luminous gas. Not really. It's just something else to bash.

Hot stuff Dodge that dragon's breath! Round about now you'll know if you can be arsed with this or not.

EyeToy Kinetic Combat

The next best thing to getting in a fight outside the pub

The problem with EyeToy games is that they're designed to appeal to everyone. As part of Sony's ongoing campaign to widen brand awareness, they're deliberately put together to be as broad, bland and unprovocative as possible, so that they're as equally easy to digest for your mum, your boss or for people who buy Davina McCall workout DVDs and don't know which way up to hold a DualShock. The problem with that, of course, is that means they aren't always much fun for *you*.

Case in point: the coaches in *Kinetic Combat* looked like they've come fresh from an ad for ladies' deodorant. They could've been gnarled, Rocky-style boxing coaches or bubblegum-cute Japanese spacegirls, but instead they're the sort of people who hang about in gyms looking so toned that you just want to heave your sweaty, biscuit-filled body behind the nearest fern and hide. They aren't that loveable, and when they told us that we'd be as slim and well-moisturised as them if we stuck with the programme for sixteen weeks, we almost put *Tekken* on instead.

Then there's Leon, the game's resident kung-fu master. He's there to teach you Hung Gar – the style in the game – and he's a bit more charming than the other two. He'll take you through the game's various options, and there are plenty of these - from typical smash-the-moving-objects stuff to actual sparring. Again, the blandness of Sony's marketisation strategy means you don't get to punch the heads off zombie ninjas – think 'flashing globes' and the occasional phoenix – but at least the games are challenging.

Kung-fu fighters

Built to use the wide-angle lens, EyeToy's movement-recognition is much improved, and the games are designed to minimise cheating. Dodging flying things is actually much harder than hitting them, and burning off a Jaffa Cake's worth of calories will leave you breathing like a sexy walrus. Leon will even teach you hand forms and chi gong breathing exercises and, while they're no substitute for going to a proper class, they're well-designed and reasonably good at telling you where you might probably be going wrong. It goes without saying, of course, that you shouldn't try any of this stuff in a fight – in terms of toughness, Hung Gar's about one step up from Tai Chi and two down from traditional Irish folk dance.

Well hung
Hung Gar was the style learned by Jet Li's character in the Once Upon A Time In China flicks.

That said, if you do genuinely manage to run the gauntlet of flatmates/family/friends discovering you kicking the air in front of a TV for the recommended four months, you'll almost certainly be in the best shape of your life. And maybe *you* can be in a deodorant advert too. **Joel Snape**

PSM3 Verdict

***Kinetic Combat* contains...**
Co-ordination | Stamina | Reactions | Speed
The world's campest kung-fu fighter

Overall For this cash you could get a whole course of actual kickboxing lessons instead, but it's still fun.

70

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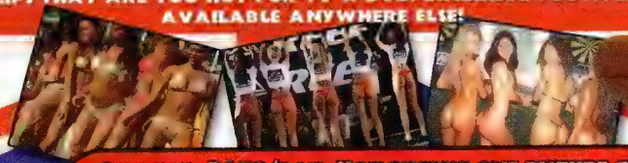

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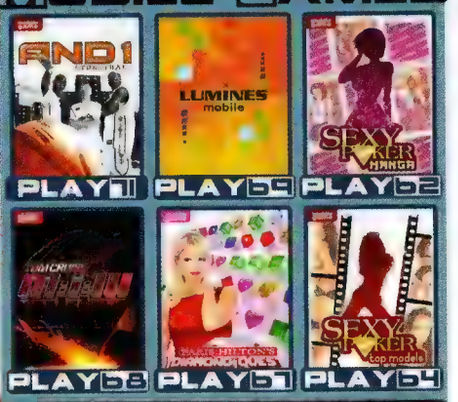

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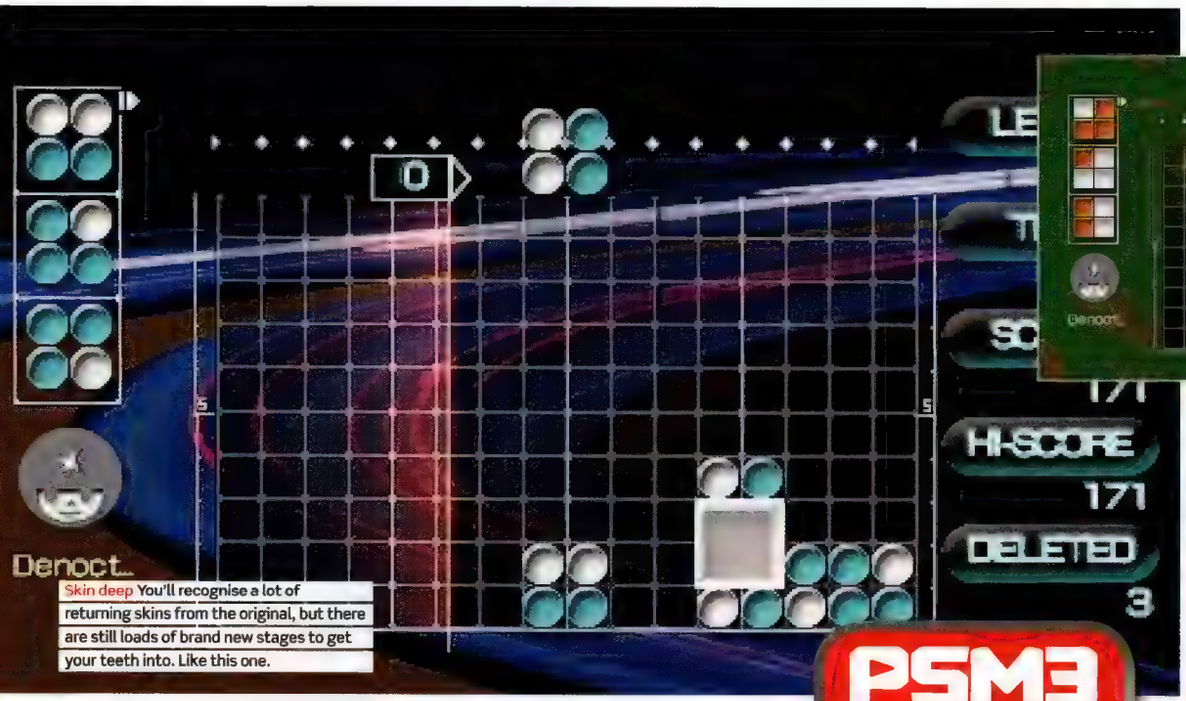
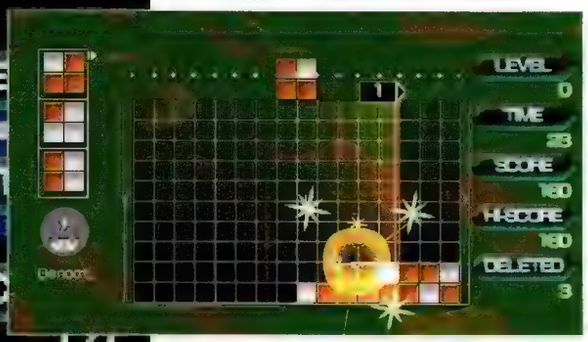
Pub Buena Vista | **Dev** Q Entertainment
Price £30 | **Release** Out Now
Multi-player 1–2 Wi-Fi

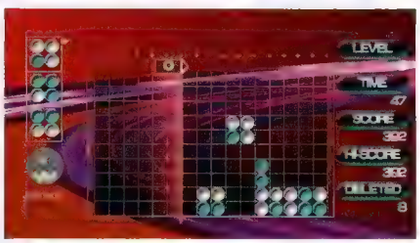
ON THE DISC
Hear us review *Lumines 2* on next month's disc
PSP/Reviews

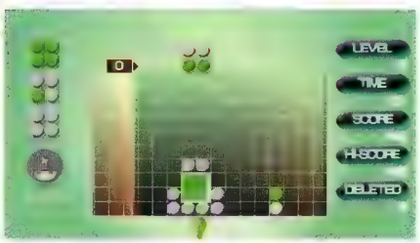


Skin deep You'll recognise a lot of returning skins from the original, but there are still loads of brand new stages to get your teeth into. Like this one.

On your sparks The hypnotic beats and colourful flashes are more hypnotic than a Paul McKenna telethon.







PSM3 BUY IT

Lumines 2

Some *awful* tunes, but still a fantastic game

Now it takes a lot to make the Black Eyed Peas bearable, so possibly the greatest praise we can heap on *Lumines 2* is that it does just that. Yes, the sequel to the block-shuffling puzzler features music from all sorts of chart acts – the worst being the Peas. We were concerned. We didn't want the world of pop pointlessly intruding into our fun. But after playing *Lumines 2* for a few hours, the tedious strains of Pump It melted into the action. It was almost tolerable. Almost.

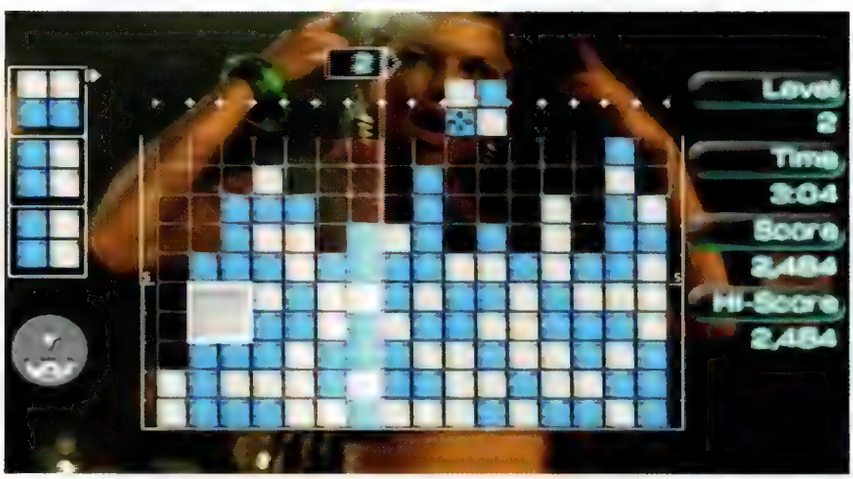
The best thing about this sequel is that Q haven't messed with the mechanics, so you still have to wipe out sparkling combos of multi-coloured squares before your towers topple over your allotted space. But in the background you'll notice a selection of famous faces and videos. Somehow, however, the sight of Gwen Stefani prancing around in a sexy cheerleader outfit isn't too distracting – the game still demands you look at its pretty squares and glancing at anything else is a surefire way to make a mistake. Our only problem with the licensed tracks is that – like it or not – you've got to play that song's stage. So no matter how well you do on Hoobastank's achingly bad Born To Lead, you won't be able to leave until it's over – it's like being stuck in one of their gigs, desperately waiting for the noise to stop.

Level up ***Lumines 2*** **offers three skill levels in Challenge mode – Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced. Each comes with unique tracks so there's incentive to try them all.**

Skin up

Other new things? *Lumines 2* also comes with new skins, including a lovely Hawaiian one with a lush video of sandy beaches and blue seas. Beautiful. Then there's a Mission mode where you have to clear blocks in a certain way – like using a single square-drop to clear an entire screen. It's tricky, but you'll want to keep plugging away. Sadly, however, they've made the Versus mode much easier with only about ten characters to play against.

Still, *Lumines* remains one of PSP's best games. The controls are simple, the gameplay is hugely addictive and the entrancing skins and music will make you slip into a, well, trance. Not even the Black Eyed Peas can detract from its brilliance. A must-have, quite simply. **Nathan Irvine**



Give Peas a chance Even Black Eyed Peas' Fergie prancing in the background can't ruin the game.

PSM3 Verdict

Lumines 2 **contains...**
Entrancing tunes | Block building | Fergie New Order | Hours of square-filled enjoyment

Overall Games like this are what your PSP was made for. Hypnotic puzzle action that you'll play for *ages*. Just great.

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Reviews round-up

"The odd, the niche or the just plain crap – verdicts on the games you might not know about"

Ubisoft | PS2 | Out now

Open Season

Tis the season for mediocre games

Another kids' movie tie-in – oh, the joys. Still, this one isn't so bad. It takes the form of a third-person action adventure where you, Boog the Grizzly bear and your little friend Elliot, the wise cracking Deer with one antler, save the creatures of the forest from the big, nasty hunters (yes, it's really that clichéd). The graphics and sound are rather lazily implemented, mind you, and to be frank Boog the Bear looks like Boog the big turd most of the time. There are 25 missions consisting pretty much entirely of fetching stuff and scaring away hunters, and you can use the talents of the forest creatures to help you. It's mildly distracting, but will only take you about five hours to play through. For the hardened gamer this is a definite miss, but should be reasonably engaging for very young children. Probably not many of you lot, then. **Kirsten Kearney**

61

EA | PSP | Out Now

Need For Speed Carbon: Own The City

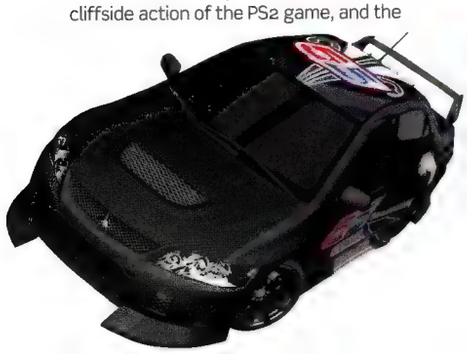
You are the wind beneath our wingmen

Avenging the death of your brother, the leader of a street racing gang, seems like a reasonable excuse to pelt at dangerous speeds around the streets – and this PSP version of the game delivers where you need it. With EA heavily touting the PSP debut of their free-roaming city, we were hoping to see some real leaps forward for *NFS* on PSP.

The wingmen system – bringing in your crew members during a race to take out opponents or give you a speed boost – definitely adds a new twist to to the game, but it's not really quite enough. *Carbon* ultimately feels far too much like its predecessors. The tracks are very dull and don't live up to the far more exciting cliffside action of the PS2 game, and the anime-style graphics used to unfold the story in cut-scenes is a bit at odds with the urban street gang theme and voiceovers – although they certainly look pretty.

Carbon PSP, then – it's a great driving game if you're new to the *Need For Speed* series, otherwise it's a bit same old, same old. **Daniel Griffiths**

72



Midway | PS2 | Out now

Happy Feet

Because nobody likes Sad Hands

Penguins are cute. Really cute. There's no need to animate then and make them dance, but the movie is out and the game must follow. This is law. So what are the little kiddiewinks getting for their pocket money? A weird mix of rhythm action games and checkpoint races, that's what. Even at their absolute hardest, however, they're as easy as wetting yourself – but you're constantly encouraged and praised throughout by the various characters anyway. *Happy Feet* is very much aimed at the under sevens and as such is a pleasant little game that jogs along nicely. It's sickeningly sweet and wholesome, but then *GTA: Penguins Packin' Heat* would hardly be a great idea. Actually, sod that, it *really* would. Can we have that instead next time? **Andy Kelly**

60

Capcom | PSP | Out now

Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded

More old, dull games for old, dull people

You probably know the drill by now – it's another retro collection, filled out primarily with hoary old crap and propped up with a few decent games in an effort to hide how rubbish everything else is. The decent games here – and by 'decent' we mean 'brilliant' – are *Street Fighter 2*, *SF2 Championship Edition* and *SF2 Hyper Fighting*, and if the very idea of portable *SF* makes you gag in excitement... you probably already own *Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max*. Hmm. The rest? Three *Ghosts 'N Goblins* games, all past their prime, surprisingly OK sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-up *Eco Warrior*, a couple of rubbish *Golden Axe* clones and enough ropey top-down blasters to make you hurl. And we did. Get this for the *SF2*s, if you like, but don't even bother with the rest. **David Cook**

65

Deep Silver | PS2 | November 24

Crusty Demons

This kicks ass. Usually your own. Ouch

The Crusty Demons are a bit like the Jackass boys or Dirty Sanchez, only instead of being mostly comprised of skaters, everyone in the group is a motocross rider. This instantly makes them harder, as bouncing about on a roaring piece of metal is ten times more dangerous than rolling down a ramp on a bit of old plywood. This is their first ever videogame and it's basically *Tony Hawk's* on bikes, with free-roaming levels full of people who, when spoken to, hand out missions. These range from basic point scoring challenges to pulling off certain tricks on certain parts of the level. Like *Tony Hawk's*, then. But while *Hawk's* tries to maintain an air of seriousness (well, Jackass-inspired nonsense aside), *Crusty Demons* thrives on being puerile. The most obvious example of this are the crashes, which are actually the game's best feature.

Who needs bones?

At any time you can hurl yourself off of your bike by pressing **B**. You can then guide your rider through the air, a bit like the aftertouch in the later *Burnouts*, and force him into damaging objects. The more stuff you smash up and the more bones you break – illustrated by a series of gruesome X-rays – the more points you get. It's all a bit daft, really, but it's fun. In some of the game's missions, breaking all your bones is pretty much essential, in fact. For example, in every level there are targets placed in hard-to-reach places that you have to toss yourself into to finish the level 100%.

But once you've spent an hour smashing your rider and his bike to bits and performing the slightly dull tasks, there's nothing to hold your interest. There are some other vehicles to drive including a tiny 'pimp car', but it's pointless and dumb. In fact, the relentless hooting and whooping and explosions are almost too much to take – it's like the world's dumbest, loudest prime time American TV show and unless you're a frat boy or a moron, you'll thirst for something with a bit more substance. A quick thrill, but nothing long-lasting. **Andy Kelly**

PSM3 Verdict

Silly, but playable. A bit repetitive, mind you.

66

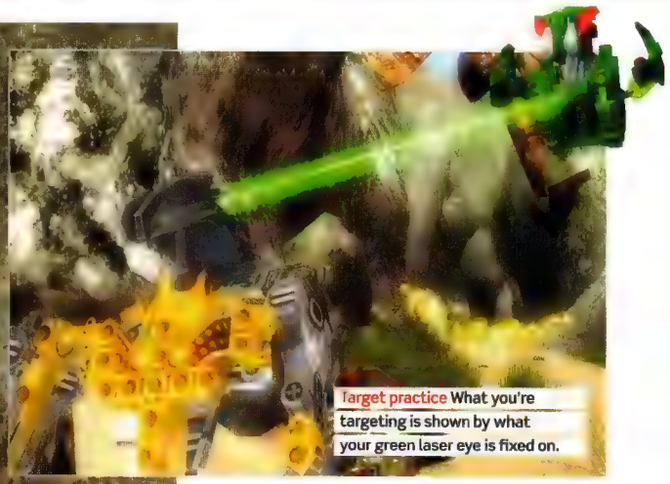
Crash and burn The crashes really make you wince, and are easily the highlight of the game.

PS2

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Traveller's Tales
Price £30 | **Release** Out Now
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
Hear us review *Bionicle Heroes* on the disc next month
PS2/Review

My face or yours? Picking up robotic masks gives you different abilities for each one you wear.


Target practice What you're targeting is shown by what your green laser eye is fixed on.

Block picking It looks pretty nice, though it can get a bit blocky (appropriately enough) on close-up inspection.

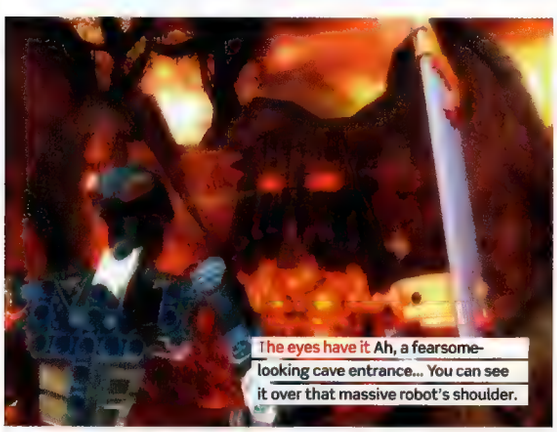
Bionicle Heroes

Lego Star Wars without Star Wars anyone? No?

Bionicle Heroes will inevitably be compared to *Lego Star Wars 2*, and then almost immediately forgotten in light of its older sibling. And it's only got itself to blame. *Bionicle Heroes* has ripped out the core ingredients of *LSW2*, incorporated them into its own (and admittedly different) gaming mechanic and, in the odd area, improved on them – but let the side down in others.

Aimed squarely at kids, the story is of two factions of roboty-Lego beings fighting it out for the control of the island. You take control of a Toa Inika, a good robot fighting the nasty Piraka. After roughly 30 seconds of play though, you'll realise we're using the word 'control' is used in an extremely liberal context indeed.

In dealing with the decision to take a more action-based approach, Traveller's Tales have put a fixed camera angle behind your character and slightly to the right, *Resi 4*-style. However, your chap takes up a third of the screen, severely handicapping your visibility while your control over the movement of the camera itself is shakier than Shakin' Stevens enjoying a milkshake.


The eyes have it Ah, a fearsome-looking cave entrance... You can see it over that massive robot's shoulder.

Strafe haven

Never mind that, though – the real bombshell is the revelation that you are unable to strafe. Aimed at younger gamers or not, in a third-person shooter this is simply unforgivable. How Traveller's Tales have overlooked this is beyond belief, and almost destroys game from the get-go, as fights simply turn into a case of hoping to be able to endure more damage than your opponents can. On the plus side, it looks good and the screen is often full of colour, as enemy laser bolts fly at you and you blow everything up, including flowers that can be force-pushed out of the ground.

Face/Off **Wearing different masks offers alternate weapons and gives you health – just a shame the controls are so dodgy throughout.**

Yes, that's right, those crazy flowers and force powers have somehow made an appearance. Force powers are made possible by collecting different masks, which also give you different weapons to use and upgrade. There are masses of collectibles and characters to collect and... does this ring any bells?

Aside from the change in camera angle and game license, *Bionicle Heroes* is essentially a less charming *LSW2* – with fewer puzzles and more action. So, if Star Wars isn't your bag and you're a Lego playing war fanatic, this might be just up your alley. The rest of us will stick to *Lego Star Wars 2*, though. **Martin Saint**

PSM3 Verdict

***Bionicle Heroes* contains...**
Lego carnage on a large scale | A bonkers camera | Loads of collectibles

Overall Ideal for youngsters old enough to shoot things but too young for blood and guts. Fun, but flawed.

62

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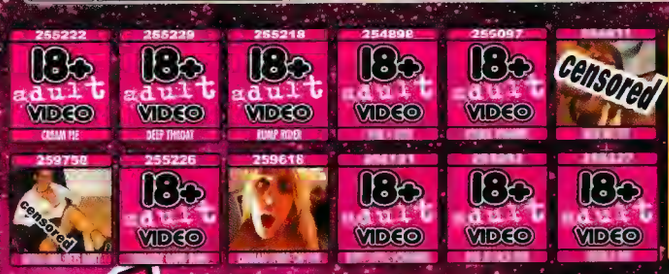

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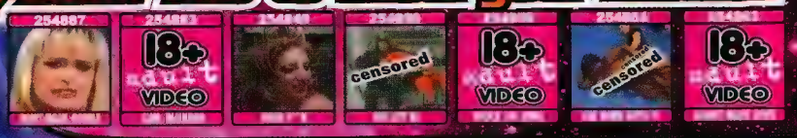

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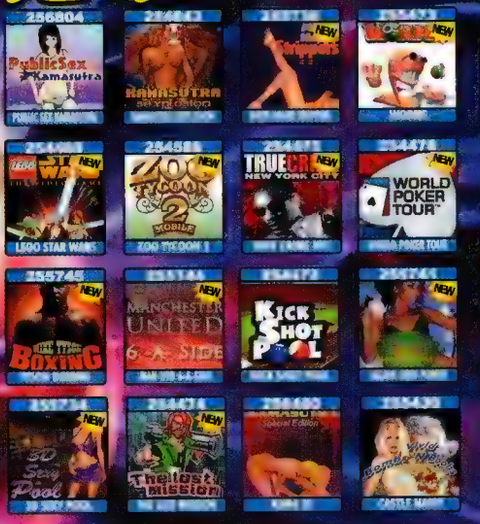

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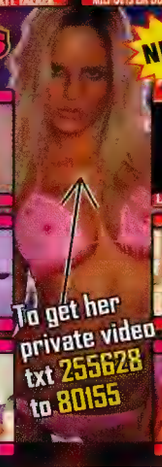

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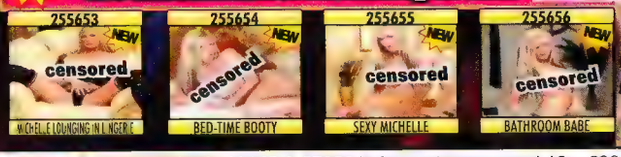
Michelle B



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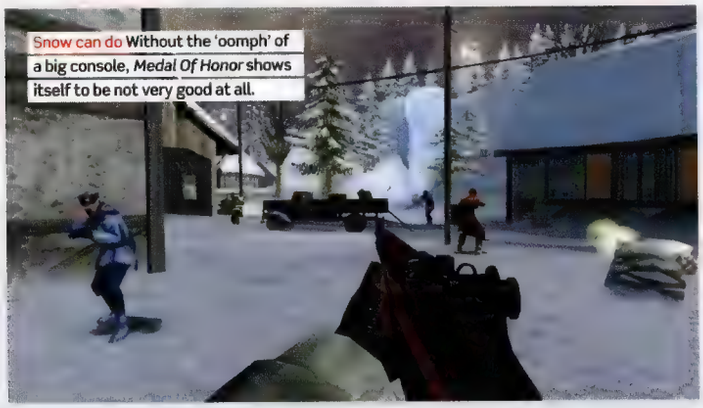


Snow can do Without the 'oomph' of a big console, *Medal Of Honor* shows itself to be not very good at all.

EA | PSP | November 24

Medal of Honor: Heroes

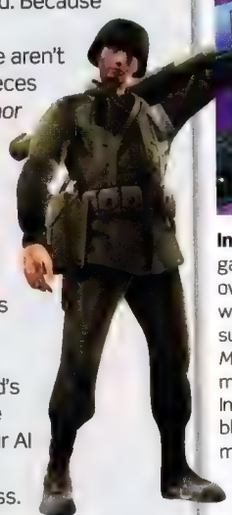
More dull than the queue at the post office

The heroes they're referring to are Lieutenant Jimmy Patterson from the first *Medal Of Honor* and *Frontline*, Sergeant John Baker of *Allied Assault* fame and Lieutenant William Holt from *European Assault*. This means that the game uses settings and situations from those games, but with new levels and controls to suit the handheld format. Unfortunately, it's dull. Really dull. Like watching Mastermind with the sound off.

Bore war

For one, it's really sluggish. It's as if you're casually strolling through the battlefield rather than tearing along, gritting your teeth and narrowly-avoiding gunfire. You know, like in war? Instead you just potter through rural Italian towns and Dutch fields taking lazy pop shots at Nazis. There's also a frustrating delay when you use the face buttons to look around while you move. It's just not as sharp, smooth and responsive as a game like this needs to be.

And what's with the missions? Pretty much all of them follow the same routine; shoot loads of Germans, pick something up, destroy something – some documents or the famous Enigma machine – and escape, which usually involves running back to where you started. Because of the technical constraints, there aren't any of the set-pieces the *Medal Of Honor* games rely on to keep them interesting. Strip the series of its famous Hollywood production values and scripted moments and it really is the world's most predictable shooter. And your AI squadmates are more than useless. We stood and watched while one of our guys shot at a German and seemed to miss every single time. He might as well not have bothered at all. And neither, come to think of it, should Electronic Arts. **Andy Kelly**



PSM3 Verdict

Without PS2's power, *MoH* is tiresome and dull.

49

Vivendi | PSP | Out now

Scarface: Money. Power. Respect

AKA *Scarface: Tedious. Ropey. Arse*

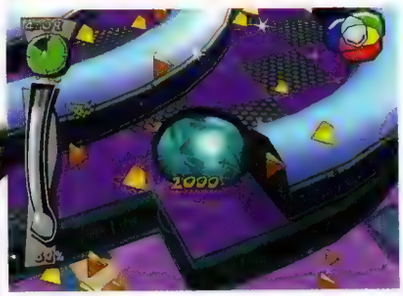
We were expecting a scaled-down version of the excellent PS2 game, but what we've got is an incredibly dull top-down strategy affair. Vivendi have taken the exciting, dangerous world of drug dealing and organised crime and turned it into a series of bland menus. If it wasn't for the movie clips between missions and voice samples here and there, you wouldn't know it was a *Scarface* game. There are action scenes, but rather than take part you just watch ten shoddily-rendered blokes clumsily shoot each other. It's like *Football Manager* with criminals, but infinitely more rubbish. One of PSP's worst games. **Andy Kelly**

33

Ignition | PS2 | Out now

Mercury Meltdown Remix

The shape-shifting blob comes to PS2



In a strange twist, we're now seeing PSP games regularly getting the port treatment over to PS2. This is the first puzzler to make its way to the big console (*Lumines* is following suit) and is the follow-up to early PSP game *Mercury*. Luckily *Meltdown* was considerably more forgiving on PSP and remains so on PS2. In short, the goal is to guide your blob (or blobs) of mercury through hazard-strewn mazes to the exit. With some improvements to the camera control, pushing a blob of mercury around is as fun as ever. **Andy Kelly**

77

Vivendi | PSP | Out now

50 Cent: Bulletproof: G-Unit Edition

50 Cent: Funproof, more like...

G-Unit Edition – the top-down version of Fiddy's laughable PS2 game – is remarkable. Remarkable because it's even worse than it was before. We would give Vivendi some credit for at least using a different developer, High Voltage, to create a fresh engine more suited to PSP (rather than just porting the PS2 title's third-person view) if it weren't for the fact that the game is so thoroughly terrible. Dull, fuzzy graphics, poor camera control and repetitive gameplay spoil both the single and multi-player game. It's basically no fun whatsoever This is one only fit for gangsta trippin' mofos. Or whatever. Anyway, word. **Kirsten Kearney**

47

Eidos | PS2 | November 24

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?: Party Edition

Are they *still* making these games?

Party Edition is like *Buzz*, but with Chris Tarrant instead of Jason Donovan and sees you able to use your *Buzz* peripheral and mugshots from your EyeToy, with cartoon characters representing you on-screen. Mind you, the studio is still lifeless and the presentation flat, but none of that matters at the festive party when nan gets excited and shouts out the answers. You'll get it for Christmas whether you want it or not. **Kirsten Kearney**

67

PSM3 Recommends

The best games from the last few months

Pro Evolution Soccer 6
Konami | PS2
"A slower, more physical and realistic sim of football's highs and lows. The least evolved *Evo* yet, but probably the best."
PSM3 Rating 91%

Canis Canem Edit
Rockstar | PS2
"An excellent turn from Rockstar. Immaculately designed and a joy to play through, *Canis Canem Edit* goes right to the top of this year's gaming class.
PSM3 Rating 93%

Scarface
Vivendi | PS2
"Everything a Scarface game should be – full of action, sleaze, '80s music, decadence... it's a pure joy and has a button *just for swearing*. Terrific."
PSM3 Rating 89%

NHL 2K7

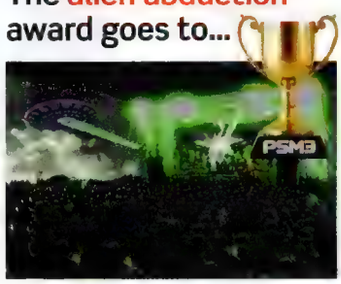
"A pretty decent ice hockey sim. Not that anyone was expecting anything else"

PSM3 Awards

The highlights (and lowlights) of this month are...

The award for rampant xenophobia goes to... the cut-scenes in Call Of Duty 3
Ah, the Scottish hate the English, the English hate the French and everybody hates the Germans. Just one big happy family... Take that Fritz!
PSM3
Isabelle of the ball She may be a lovely French lady, but all the guys in the game hate her. Well, she is a woman after all.

The alien abduction award goes to...



Guitar Hero

Nail the last solo on Freebird... and a massive flying saucer swoops down to abduct you. If only that would happen to James Blunt.

The worst new boy award goes to...

Sonic Rivals

Sonic Rivals introduces another irksome character – Silver the Hedgehog. He's hugely annoying – and not even silver. He's *white*!

Buyer Beware! The games they're afraid to send us

Street Dance Oxygen
A dance game claiming: "This has to be the only way to boost your fitness levels." Erm... Swimming? The *gym*?

Realm Of The Dead Midas
A slash-'em-up across such radically innovative areas as – a forest! A mansion! A dungeon! Wowzers. Apparently, it's "zombietastic". We're sold!

Hi-Score Table

☐ Final Fantasy XII	p70	94%
☐ Guitar Hero 2	p74	92%
☐ Lumines 2	p94	92%
☐ Call Of Duty 3 PS3	p20	89%
☐ Call Of Duty 3 PS2	p64	88%
☐ Pro Evo 6 PSP	p88	84%
☐ Smackdown 2007	p84	80%
☐ Mega Drive Collection	p90	78%
☐ Mercury Meltdown Remix	p98	77%
☐ Destroy All Humans 2	p78	73%
☐ NFS Carbon: Own The City	p95	72%
☐ EyeToy: Kinetic Combat	p92	70%
☐ Millionaire: Party Edition	p98	67%
☐ Crusty Demons	p95	66%
☐ Sonic Rivals	p91	65%
☐ Capcom Classics Reloaded	p95	65%
☐ Bionicle Heroes	p96	63%
☐ Spyro: A New Beginning	p82	63%
☐ Open Season	p95	61%
☐ Happy Feet	p95	61%
☐ Medal Of Honor: Heroes	p98	49%
☐ Justice League Heroes	p76	48%
☐ 50 Cent: G Unit Edition	p98	47%
☐ Family Guy	p80	43%
☐ Scarface PSP	p98	33%

EA | PSP | December 18

EA Replay

A trip down memory lane can be painful

When this dropped onto our desks we expected it to be excellent stuff. Electronic Arts have got loads of quality old titles that should be included in a retro compilation. Sadly, we weren't expecting *EA Replay* to include some of the trash there is here. While *Road Rash* (although you'd hardly need all three of the series), *Syndicate* and *Desert Strike* are reasonably solid and deserve another look, there's a whole load of trump. *Budokan* is one of the worst fighting games ever, *Virtual Pinball* is literally a waste of disk space and *Ultima VII: The Black Gate*, anyone? Nope, thought not. *B.O.B*, *The Haunting* and *Mutant League Football* are all just about OK, but they don't demand your attention and feel bland and lacking in character. *Sega Mega Drive Collection* (see page 90) shows that back-catalogue mixes can be fun, but EA have simply presented us with 14 lightweight games. We've our fingers crossed for a superior sequel – containing, for instance, *Sim City* or *Need For Speed*, but this set of old-fashioned filler should be avoided. **Nathan Irvine**

57

2K Sports | PS2 | Out now

NHL 2K7

Ice, ice, bab– sorry, hockey. Our bad

Kazakhstan 4 - World All-Stars 0. *That's* how good at games we are. At least, we thought it was down to that until we kept on winning all the time and realised that, actually, the computer opponents in *NHL 2K7* simply aren't up to much. Once you're used to the game, you see – especially the new Pressure Control system (jab R3 and then use the face buttons to spray defence-bamboozling passes) – you'll most probably find it something of a walkover.

Still, it's as fun as ever despite that, although if you've played any of the last few years' *NHL 2K* games you're not going to find a whole lot different on offer here. It's fast and has loads of game modes, including some daft (though entertaining) party games, but it's not as slick as the likes of EA's *NHL* series and, just occasionally, the frame-rate goes all wonky. Regardless, it's another pretty decent ice hockey simulation. Not that anyone was expecting anything more or less than that. **David Cook**

70

Playing PlayStation Longer Harder Deeper

Extended Play

Start

GENIUS

102 10 incredible moments of RPG lunacy in *Fahrenheit*
Warning: May contain sex and mopping...

EXPLOITS

106 Go fatality crazy in *MK: Armageddon*
We show you our 25 favourite moves and gory game secrets.

SECRETS

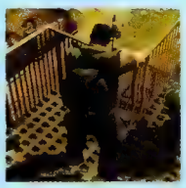
108 Rescue rock legend Phil Collins in *GTA: Vice City Stories*
We don't just make this stuff up, y'know.

ONLINE

110 *PES6* vs *FIFA 2007* online shootout
So which is the best online football game? We test them both.

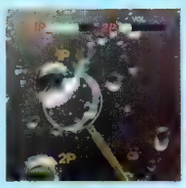
FACE-OFF

113 Smack the smile off Sir Alan Sugar's smug bonce
He's asking for it. We give him it big-style.



CLASSIC

114 Why *Freedom Fighters* is the best squad game ever
And why did nobody buy it? Find out here.



NATION

116 Why racing raindrops is the most original game ever
Can you beat this amazing game idea?

NATION

118 Find out how this scary china baby intends to sell you PlayStation 3
Just don't cry, OK?

PLAYSTATION CELEBRATION

The history of Riiiiiiidge Racer!

Back before PSone was invented and Ken Kutaragi was just an engineer at Sony, the big name in Japanese videogames was Namco. So when the PSX project (later renamed PlayStation) was kick-started there was only one place to go to give the new machine some much-needed credibility. If Sega had *Virtua Fighter*, then PlayStation had *Tekken* (courtesy of Namco) and if Sega had *Daytona* then Sony had fresh new kid on the block, Namco's amazing *Ridge Racer*.

You never forget your first *Ridge* and, in an era when 3D was the new cool, porting an arcade perfect conversion of the world's favourite arcade cabinet racer into your living room guaranteed a PlayStation a baying audience from day one.

And it's a trick Sony keep playing. When PS2 launched, another *Ridge* showed what the new kit was capable of and for PS3, who's there in the starting grid? Another fresh *Ridge Racer*. Here's the *Ridge* story so far. When Sony want to launch PS4, who are they gonna call...?

RAGE RACER

Format: PSone Released: 1996
In a bold break from tradition *Rage Racer* turned down the bright colours and ramped up the customisation options in an effort to be more 'real' in the face of competition. Special mention to the amazing banked and sloped courses and incredible turn of speed.

RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

Format: PSone Released: 1995
The arcades got *Ridge Racer 2* (which added multi-player support to the original game) but PSone got *Revolution*. Not only did it feature three new tracks (original *Ridge* only had one core track at its heart) but it used PSone's link-up feature to allow two players to race together.

OTHER GAMES IN THE RIDGE UNIVERSE

Starting in the arcades *Ridge* found true fame when it became *the* reason to buy PlayStation. What followed was a tightrope walk that required new titles for the arcade (that wouldn't show up their latest PlayStation *Ridge* too much) and new PlayStation games (that would still be fresh to those who pumped a fortune into the arcade cabinets). The result? The stunning arcade only *Rave Racer*, which will is therefore now lost in history and the new depth and lengthy story options of *Rage Racer* and *Ridge Racer 4* (still our favourite of the series) on PSone. The superb PSP games (being compilations of Ridge's greatest tracks) round off the current gen nicely. Meanwhile *Ridge 6* on 360 took the game hi-def, but it's in *Ridge 7* on PS3 that it really shines. Watch this space.

RAVE RACER

Format: Arcade Released: 1996

Oi, oil Perhaps inspired by the series' universally superb music, Namco took mid-'90s hardcore to heart and named their latest arcade cabinet *Rave Racer*. Famous for its wide, sweeping night-time city track and jumps, it never made it onto a console and remains an arcade-only classic.

PSP RIDGE RACERS 1 + 2

Format: PSP Released: 2004 & 2006

A superb compendium of *Ridge*-ness in your pocket – and the only reason to buy a PSP when it was launched. Shame that PSP *Ridge 2* is pretty much identical to PSP *Ridge 1*. Come on, Namco. *Ridge* deserves better treatment than that.

RIDGE RACER 5

Format: PS2 Released: 2000

The first *Ridge* on PS2. It looked great but actually wasn't any more fun to play that *Ridge 4*, giving rise to moans about PS2's (lack of) power. The famous 'jaggies' (rough edges) didn't do PS2 any favours either. Still, there were some great tracks, which made it onto the PSP game four years later.

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

Format: PSone Released: 1998

By now *Gran Turismo* had surfaced, perhaps driving Namco to produce what many see as their best *Ridge* yet. There's car customisation, an RPG-like team story element and a superb ambient soundtrack. Oh, and the best track designs of all.

RIDGE RACER

Format: PSone Released: 1994

Appearing in arcades in '93 (and on PSone a year later) *Ridge Racer* defined the 3D arcade racing game – most famously the powerslide 'drift' handling that requires you to take impossible corners at high speed *sideways*.

RIDGE RACER 7

Format: PS3 Released: 2006

Who'd have thought that, after all this time, one of our favourite games in the PlayStation 3 launch line-up would be another *Ridge Racer*? Xbox 360 *Ridge 6* looked pretty good, but the team were saving their best tracks and graphics tricks for an all-new PS3 monster. See page 50 for more.

PLAYSTATION GENIUS

10 genre-busting moments of brilliance in Fahrenheit

Andy Kelly

Pub Atari
Dev Quantic Dream
FYI PS2 | 2005 | PSM66 87%
Set in New York during an unusually heavy snowstorm, Lucas Kane has killed a man without even knowing it. Your job is to help him find out why.

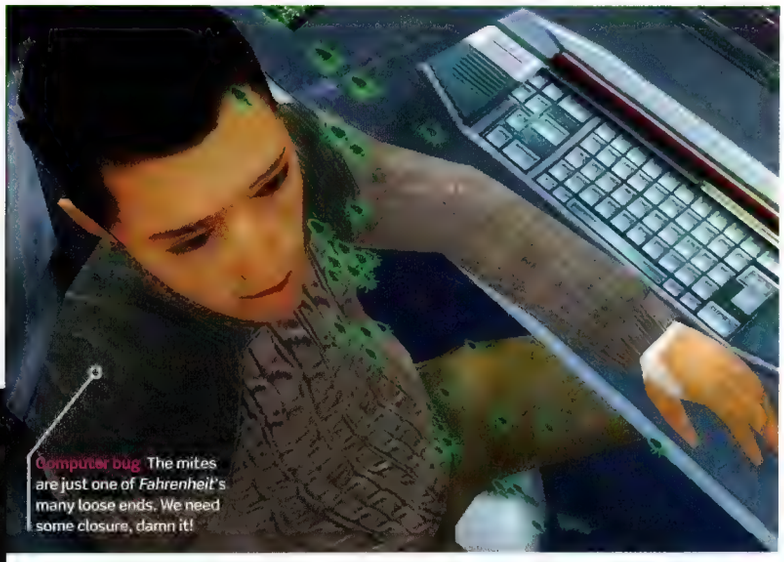
1 AVOID THE FILTH

You've just stabbed someone in a dingy diner toilet. You don't know *why* you did it – all you know is that this is a busy place and someone's bound to wander in and catch you. This is where *Fahrenheit*'s infamous freedom of play comes into its own. If you're feeling particularly blasé, you can just stroll away and pretend nothing ever happened, but your best bet is to be meticulous, clean everything up and hide the body in an empty stall. Sounds easy, but when a 24-style split-screen appears showing an off-duty cop on his way for a slash, the tension becomes *unbearable*.

2 DANCE WITH A FRENCH BLOKE

Specifically, David Cage, *Fahrenheit's* writer and director. To unlock this slightly terrifying curio you have to collect 150 bonus point cards and buy the 'Hidden Dance Floor' video from the Secrets menu. It's worth it just to see the balding genius grinding against Carla, the game's female protagonist in nothing but pants and a vest. Other highlights include a nun rubbing herself suggestively and the Oracle throwing funky shapes.

Jive turkey If you want to see Cage in motion, check his moves out on YouTube – www.tinyurl.com/yydeqg



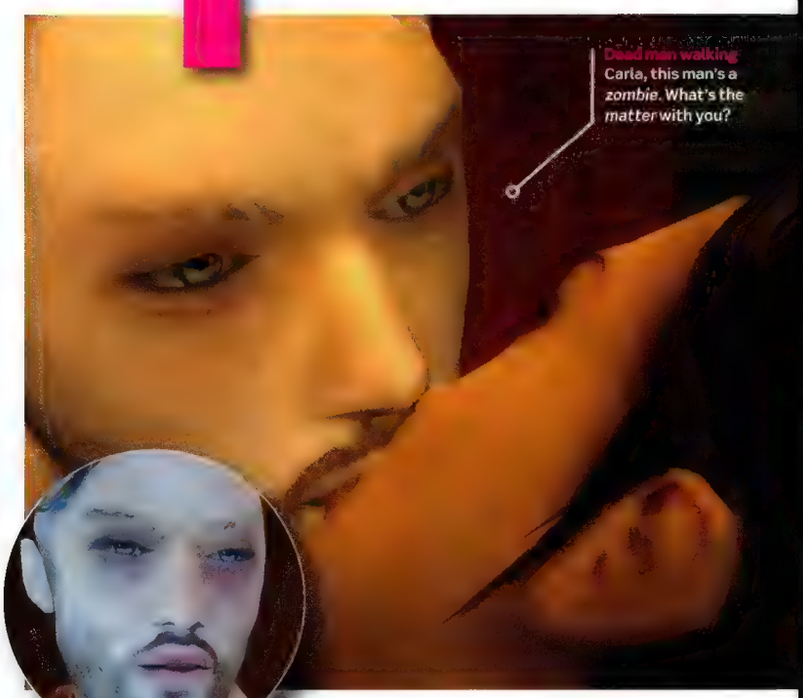
Computer bug The mites are just one of *Fahrenheit's* many loose ends. We need some closure, damn it!

3 BATTLE INVISIBLE GREEN PARASITES

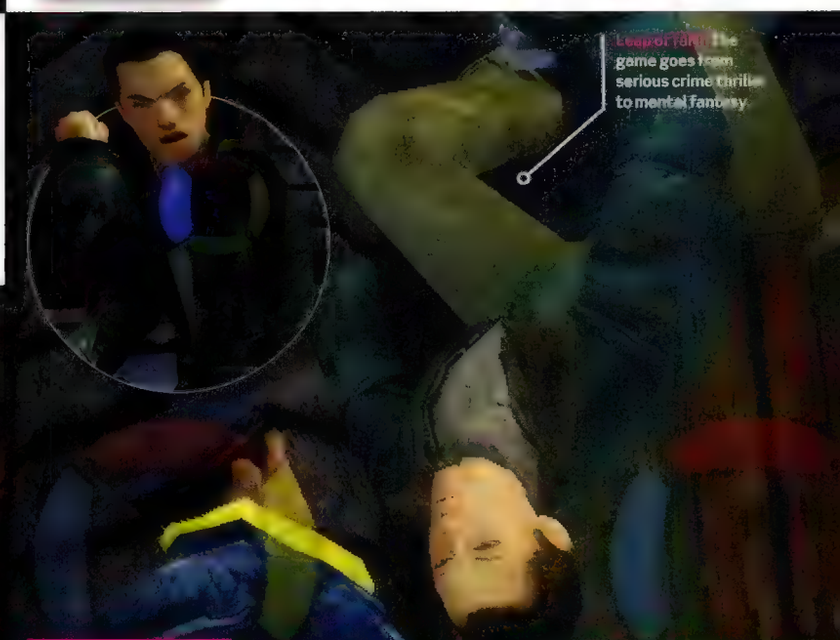
The day after the murder, Lucas starts seeing green insects everywhere. At work he freaks out, convinced a giant dust mite is trying to kill him. The player sees it and Lucas sees it, but his co-workers don't and as far as they're concerned, he's just gone mental. Infuriatingly, the bugs are never explained. We reckon they're a visual representation of Lucas' guilt.

4 MAKE SWEET ZOMBIE LOVE

Near the end of the game, Lucas dies. Then he comes back to life. In an abandoned subway station after all hope for humanity is lost, he and Carla end up having sex. Think about that. She's shagging a *corpse*. Yick.



Dead man walking Carla, this man's a *zombie*. What's the *matter* with you?



Leap of faith The game goes from serious crime thriller to mental fantasy

5 LEARN SLOW-MO MATRIX MOVES

After being cornered by three cops, Lucas gets ready to submit to a night in the cells. But suddenly he becomes aware of an intense power brewing within him. In a flash he does a backflip, kicks everyone's ass, leaps onto a passing helicopter, jumps over some cars and escapes. From this point on, Lucas becomes an *unstoppable super ninja*.

ON THE DISC
See the PS3 future of RPGs in White Knight Story

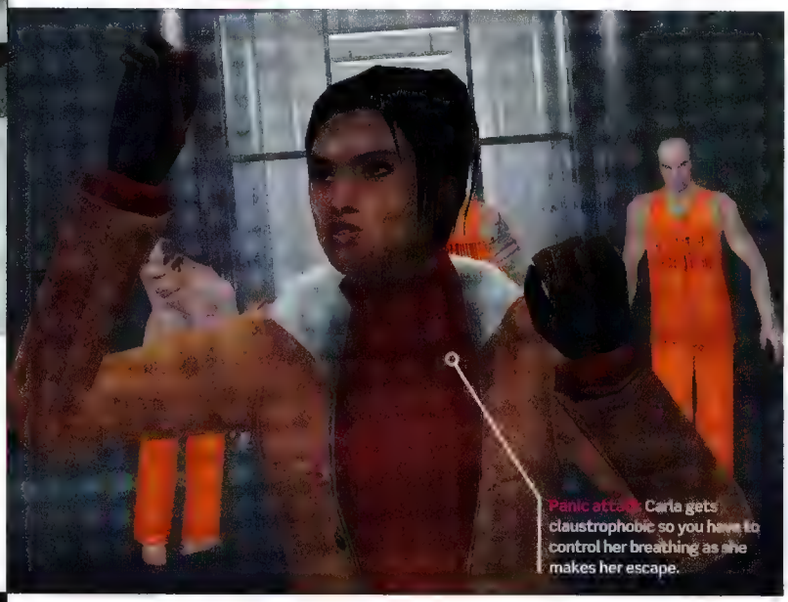
Snow joke Lucas uses his super powers to chuck bricks at the Oracle's head.

6 ROOFTOP FIGHT

Zombie Lucas and the Oracle have a scrap on the roof of an orphanage. The pair use telekinesis to throw things at each other, battle with huge lead pipes and fly through the air like in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. It's all a bit silly, really.

7 ESCAPE FROM A NUTHOUSE

In a scene lifted almost directly from classic horror flick Silence Of The Lambs, Carla visits a caged-up lunatic who can help her with her case. But as she's leaving there's a power cut and the cells' electronic locks are released. Carla has to sneak through the shadows avoiding grunting, snarling mentals. Much like the Big Brother house.



Panic attack Carla gets claustrophobic so you have to control her breathing as she makes her escape.

Lady in red The net disguises itself as Agatha to fool Lucas. This is just plain daft.

8 THE INTERNET COMES TO LIFE

This scary-looking cyborg is actually an artificial intelligence that's been growing and multiplying in the internet. So essentially, it *is* the internet. It's after the indigo child, the same person Lucas and the Oracle are after, which means only one thing - you have to fight the bloody internet. If it beats Lucas, you get a bad ending where machines take over the Earth. Matrix, anyone?

9 DODGING EVIL ANGELS

In another dream sequence similar to the scene with the giant green bugs, Lucas imagines that statues of angels in his brother's church come mysteriously to life. They grab him and fly around the rafters, trying to drop him on the smooth hard marble below.

Dark angel Why would angels try and kill you? Aren't they meant to be nice? This scene made us upset.

GameAmmo

"If you take an aspirin then drink the gin in Lucas' kitchen, you'll die."

10

SEDUCING YOUR EX

When your ex-girlfriend comes 'round to pick up some of her stuff you can distract her by offering her a drink. Give her gin and she loosens up a little and you find yourself playing guitar for her. Hit every note and she'll be hit with nostalgia. Sexy nostalgia. The two of you chat for a while which leads to a bit of snogging. Next thing you know you're at it like rabbits. Sexy rabbits.

The ones we didn't pick...

The morgue

During the autopsy of Luan Krasici, Carlos has to listen to the coroner's gross observations and look at and touch gruesome internal organs. Every time he says a new one Carlos has to guess what it is. There's a real piece of information in this.

The panther

Lucas gets tranquilised in dark, scary jungle and finds himself in a cage. Once he's escaped Mr Jones gets him through the level. It's weird.

The endings

If you beat the game and the credits roll in the standard fashion you get a nice happy ending.

EMAIL PSM3 @

Disagree with our choice? Then send us your picks

psm3@futurenet.co.uk

ON THE DISC
Our review of MK: Armageddon is on the DVD

PLAYSTATION EXPLOITS

Kill everyone messily in Mortal Kombat: Armageddon

Joel Snape

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want a game exploded in ludicrous detail? Tell us:
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Pub Midway
Dev Midway
FYI PS2 | 2006 | PSM81 80%
Kombat comes to a klose on PS2 as everyone in the Netherrealm goes after previously-minor character Blaze and gets themselves dismembered, speared or exploded in the process. The gameplay hasn't changed much, but it's still solid and fun

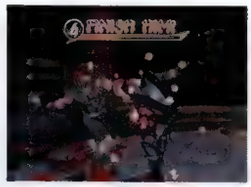
KOMBO KOLLECTION The 25 best fatalities

You can't be the baddest ass in the Outworld without laying an entire buffet of pain on your opponent and leaving him in a blubbering heap. The key is using transitions, chains and a finisher to create the ultimate in unpleasantness.

Chain move... Heart rip
Do this: Forward, Forward, △
You might think this would work as a finisher – but no, tearing someone's still-beating heart out of their ribcage is survivable. Just like in Temple Of Doom

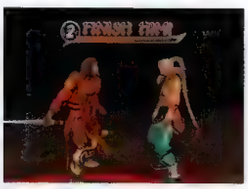
Chain move... Brain rip
Do this: Back, Back, △
We could make sarky comments about only Big Brother contestants being able to live without brains, but under the circumstances it seems unpleasant.

Chain move... Thigh rip
Do this: Forward, Back, △
Why the thigh? Because there's something visceral about something ripping a chunk of meat and femur out of your leg, that's why.



Chain move... Arm rip
Do this: ↑, ↑, △
This is where it all gets a bit slapstick – rip someone's arm off and you're set up for a hit-them-with-the-soggy-end finisher. Slap! Slap! Slap! Urgh.

Chain move... Double arm rip
Do this: Back, Forward, △
The classic double-arm rip – as popularised by Jax in *Mortal Kombat 2* – is now a mainstay among the Kombatants.



Transition move... Pull out sword
Do this: ↑, ↓, ↑, □
The only move that doesn't hurt your opponent – you'll need to do a chain move to start, but this sets up serious pain.

Chain move... Left arm slice
Do this: Forward, Forward, □
Sword moves are only available with certain characters – mostly the ninjas, and anyone who packs an axe.

Chain move... Right arm slice
Do this: Forward, Forward, △
For the classic Monty Python effect, you can combine both arm slices and leave your opponent half-limbless. Ick.

Chain move... Gut
Do this: Back, Back, △
Do this one after the other sword moves as you'll lose your chopper – though it'll stay wedged in your rival's liver while you think of something else nasty to do.

Chain move... Impale
Do this: Back, Back, ○
A bit like the gut, only higher up and through the chest. Probably good for killing vampires, if you actually care about that sort of thing.

Transition move... Hit to knees
Do this: ↓, Back, ○
A simple clout to bring an opponent to their knees – setting them up for something else.

Transition move... Spin around
Do this: ↓, Forward, ○
A backfist that twirls your opponent around. Most finishers can still be performed from behind.

Transition move... Face-down
Do this: ↓, Back, △
Knock your opponent onto their face and they're vulnerable to a whole new array of vicious finishers.

Chain move... Knee neck-break
Do this: ↑, Forward, △
This is only available after you've swatted your opponent to their knees. Nip behind them and mess their vertebrae about.

Chain move... Behind heart rip
Do this: Forward, Forward, △
Just like the bog-standard heart rip – only from behind. It makes it seem even nastier when they can't see it coming.

Chain move... Knee drop
Do this: Back, Back, ○
One of a set of chains that it's possible to pull off in rapid succession when your opponent is face down. Plant your knee into the back of his head.

Chain move... Back stomp
Do this: ↑, ↑, ○
Another face down chain move – useful if you're trying to bump up your chain count for an ultimate fatality. You won't need that spine any more, chummy!

Finish him! Face-down spine rip
Do this: →, →, ○
Now we're getting into the things that actually kill you – like having your head and spine detached...

Finish him... Head rip
Do this: ↑, ↑, ○
Simple, timeless, effective – cut off the head and the body dies. Then you can use it as a novelty bowling ball or a pencil holder or something.

Finish him... Neck break
Do this: Back, Back, ○
Beloved of ninjas and Arnold Schwarzenneger, pro marines say this doesn't really work in real life. Marines, eh? No sense of humour.

Finish him! Spine rip
Do this: ↓, ↓, ○
Invented by Sub Zero and nicked by everyone else, you can't beat the classic rip-their-head-off move. Just grab your enemy and... rrrrrrrrip!

Finish him! Head smash
Do this: Forward, Forward, ○
The easiest move to remember if you're in a hurry – it's like that Tango ad that got banned in the '80s, only more powerful and a little bit fatal.

Finish him! Torso rip
Do this: Forward, Back, ○
We're not actually sure how this works – surely it's the same as just picking someone up? Unless you glue their feet to the floor first, or something.

Finish him! Double-arm rip
Do this: Forward, Forward, ⊗
Only possible if you've just done the arm rip – you use it like a bat to take your opponent's head off. Don't try that at home, kids.

Finish him! Double Arm Finisher
Do this: Back, Back, ○
Only possible after the double arm rip. But worth it for the sight of your enemy's head flying off into the distance.

FATAL FAQ

Q What do all the labels mean?
A Sorry to [illegible]

Q How many can you actually string together?
A The [illegible]

GameAmmo

"Enter →, L1, R2, ↓, ↑, L1 at the Krypt to see the MK blooper vid"

BIG LADS The boss finishers

All the bigger characters – Moloch, Goro, Kintaro, Motaro and the Dragon King – have a more limited, brutal set of finishing moves. Shao Kahn doesn't count in this category, so don't pick him.

Chest punch... →, →, ◎
Everything's better when you've got four arms – you can tickle the one-eyed milkman twice as quick... and punch really, really hard as well.

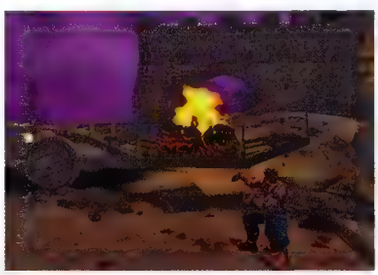
Uppercut... ←, ←, ◎
Moloch sort of reminds us of Lenny from the old Bugs Bunny cartoons. Except for when he punches your head off. Lenny never did that. Bugs was too smart.

Head crush... ↑, ↑, ◎
It'd be great to be a ninja monster. You could do things like this to people who dither about in the posh vinegar aisle at supermarkets. Grr.

Kick to head... ↓, ↑, ◎
We're surprised the monstrous characters have the sort of flexibility needed to pull this off. Surprised, but pleased. That's yoga lessons for you.

Exploding... →, ←, ◎
But we've saved the messiest for last: absolutely blasting apart player two's torso in a flurry of guts and half-eaten crisps. Delightful.

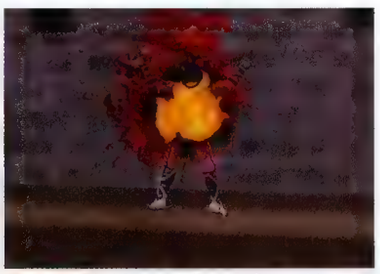
TWANG The best death in Mortal Kombat



The Set-up On the fortress stage, you'll want to manoeuvre your opponent close to the gigantic flaming lumps of rock in the corner, then use a juggle starter to knock him into them.

The Surprise What are they? Why, ammo for a catapult, naturally, and before you can say 'Whooarghl' your opponent's been hurled skywards like a human spitball.

The Flight It's not looking good for our hero – they're on fire, flailing their limbs and screaming. But they've survived worse, surely? This is the Netherrealm, after all.



The Landing Erk. Unfortunately, the catapult was pointed directly at a wall and our hero's now little more than a blot. Outworld's castles are made of pretty sturdy stuff.

SPEED KILLS The best Motor Kombat deaths

Into The Wall In Sub Zero's stage, the first big right-hander has a red-section on the left. Use the shove move (◎) to nudge a fellow racer into it, and they'll spread themselves against the ice.

Under The Rollers When the Jungle stage splits into three paths, you'll notice one is randomly marked XXX. Slam another racer into that one and they'll be minced under a gigantic log.

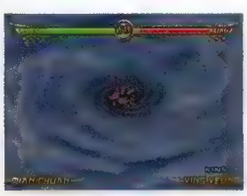
Under The Hammer As you go into the section full of red squares in Bo Rai Cho's stage, use your power-ups to slow other racers down so they can't evade the crushers.

Into The Lava On Scorpion's stage, virtually any bit of dodgy cornering will see you burnt to a crisp, making it one of the nastier bits of the game.

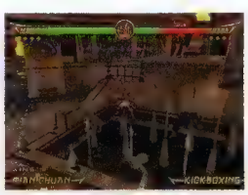
BRUTALITY The nastiest scenery kills

In certain stages, there's no need to scuff your knuckles unnecessarily – just manoeuvre your opponent into one of the game's red zones, use a juggle starter and watch them get mangled.

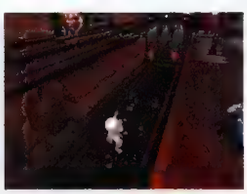
Nasty 1... Fan-Tastic
In the Finish Him slot. Uppercut your opponent on the techno stage and they'll go straight into the blades on the ceiling, decorating the camera with their organs.



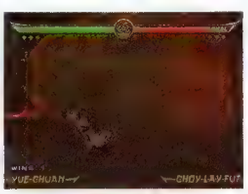
Nasty 2... The Portal
Once one kombatant has been kicked down the steps, first man to go off the edge goes into the Portal – which simply exploderises their carcass.



Nasty 3... Spike Out
This is textbook Kombat – uppercut an opponent onto a stake and they'll wriggle about a bit, before sliding down the shaft and going limp. Ewww.

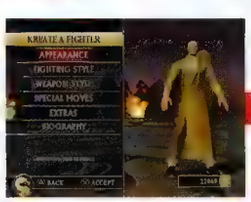


Nasty 4... The Subway
Uppercut your opponent onto the tracks and they'll jump to their feet, dazed, just in time to be clattered by an unusually-punctual train.

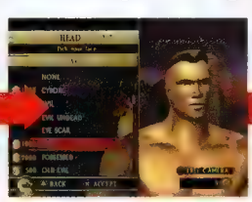


Nasty 5... The Rollers
Kick a man onto the rollers and he'll scamper along trying to outrun the conveyor for a few seconds – before leaving a man-sized smear on the wheel.

KILL [A certain Florida lawyer – legal ed.]



If you've been following the court battles over Hot Coffee and *Bully*, you'll be aware that [a certain Florida lawyer] hates them. And now he's turned his attention to MK. Here's how to make him.



Step 1... Face style
Appearance: Head (2/7) Face: Old Hair: Anime 3 (Color: 1, 15) Helmet: None

Step 2... Upper body
Appearance: Upper Body (3/7) Torso: Suit (Color: 1, 6 Accent Color: 2, 6) Cloth: None Gloves: None

Step 3... Lower body
Appearance: Lower Body (4/7) Pants: Tuxedo (Color: 1, 5) Belt: None Boots: Tuxedo (Color: 1, 4)

Step 4... Face detail
Appearance: Attributes (7/7) Nose Width: 4 Nose Length: 15 Mouth Width: 10 Lip Size: 8 Cheekbones: 20 Cheek Width: 17 Jaw Width: 17 Eyelids: 0 Eye Angle: 10

Final step... Moves
Special Moves Projectile: Chi-Blast Charge: Unassigned Disabling: Banshee Scream Teleport: Mind Warp Throw: Heel To The Gut

ON THE DISC
Hear us review Vice City Stories on the disc now

PLAYSTATION SECRETS

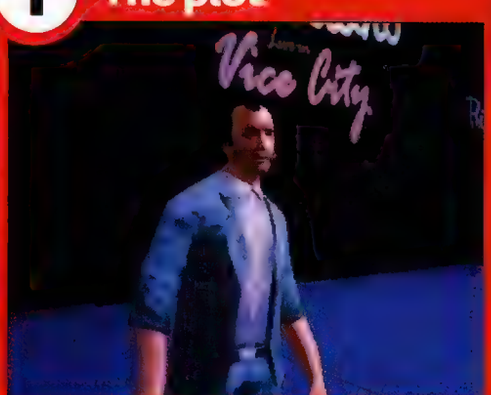
Save Phil Collins life in GTA: Vice City Stories

Yes! It's Phil Collins! In *GTA*! The real man and everything!

"Several hitmen attempt to drop the lighting rig on his wispy pate"

The hottest ticket in town
After the 'Save Phil' mission, Victor can return to the Vice City stadium to see the concert any time he pleases – but it'll cost him a whopping $6000! Now that truly is criminal.

1 The plot



Buster minute After saving Phil Collins' skin from would be assassins several times, the final attempt on his life comes at his gig – as several hitmen attempt to drop the lighting rig on his wispy pate. You've got to save him – against all odds!

2 The rescue

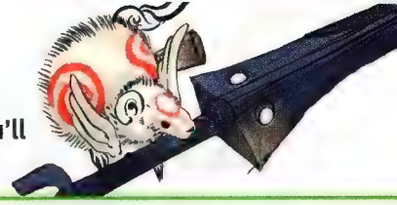
Vance Into The Light While the crooner sings In The Air Tonight, our hero Victor Vance must beat the Sussudio out of the assassins working their way through the cabling. You can't hurry love, as Phil said, but you'd better hurry now or Phil's gonna snuff it.

3 The rockgasm

Another gig in paradise Phew, you made it. Phil is able to continue his rendition of his first solo single, climaxing in some powerful work on the 'skins' while the crowd are safe to frug to his brand of easy rock. All this and we didn't need a jacket... Oh never mind.

GameAmmo

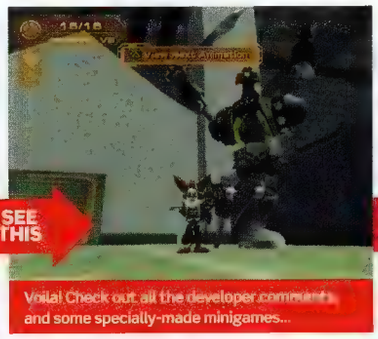
"Finish *Okami* once and you'll unlock the *Okami* jukebox"



PlayStation's best kept secrets uncovered every month

Hidden Level › **Ratchet & Clank 3** › Insomniac Museum

Enter + complete EVERY THING in the game, a go here in Metropolis, at 3am in the morning.



Voila! Check out all the developer comments, and some specially-made minigames...

...as well as enemies that never made it into the game and some race courses that were axed.

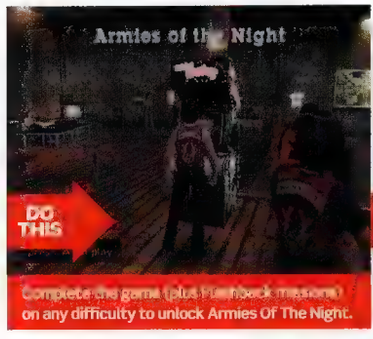
Hidden Tribute › **Okami** › Pensioner Kicks Ass

Help the granny in the first village – try her washing – and she'll give you Cherry Cakes.

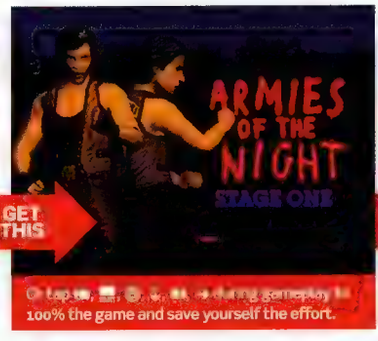
This being Okami's la-la-land, making cakes means imitating *Street Fighter* characters...

...the evil Ken-and-Ryu-alike Akuma – after a huge combo, she finishes with a badass pose.

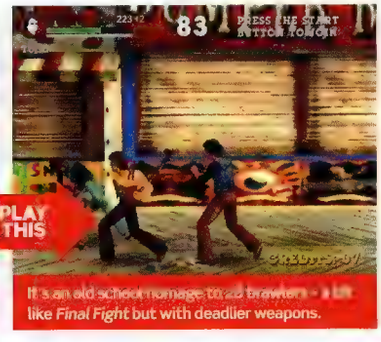
Hidden Game › **The Warriors** › Armies Of The Night



Complete the game (plus Flashback missions) on any difficulty to unlock Armies Of The Night.



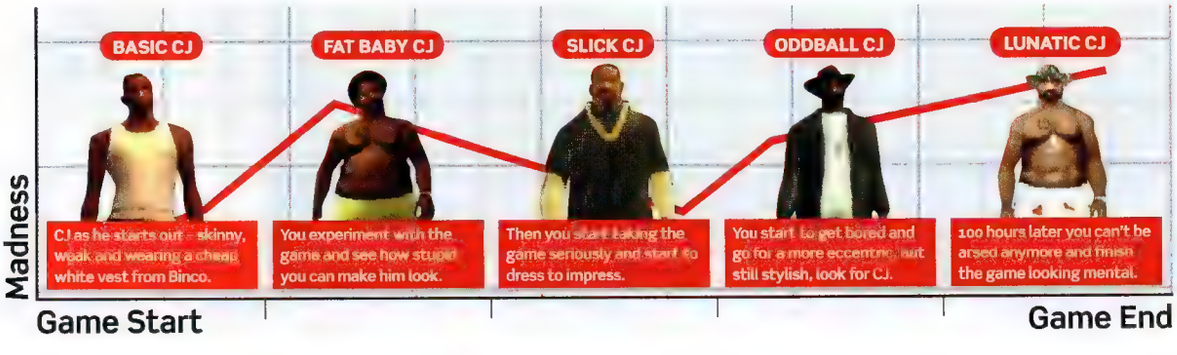
Or tap to ■, ●, ✕, ▲ during gameplay to 100% the game and save yourself the effort.



It's an old school homage to 2D brawlers – a bit like *Final Fight* but with deadlier weapons.

From zero to hero in... GTA: San Andreas

The evolution of Carl 'CJ' Jonhnson, from skinny street punk to blinged-up killer


BASIC CJ
FAT BABY CJ
SLICK CJ
ODDBALL CJ
LUNATIC CJ
Madness
CJ as he starts out – skinny, weak and wearing a cheap white vest from Binco.
You experiment with the game and see how stupid you can make him look.
Then you start taking the game seriously and start to dress to impress.
You start to get bored and go for a more eccentric, but still stylish, look for CJ.
100 hours later you can't be arsed anymore and finish the game looking mental.
Game Start
Game End

The Top 5

Cheats you *must* know

1 The Sims 2: Pets
Daft-coloured cats

To get your paws – ho ho – on some neon yellow cats, go to the Codes menu and enter 'ZZZ11ZZZHQAAQg1ZB1A'. Here kitty kit... Arrgh!

2 Scarface: The World Is Yours
Replenish your health

To refill your health bar, pause the game, enter the cheats menu and enter 'Medik' as a code.

3 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07
Extra courses and golfers

Enter 'Eldrick' at the Codes menu to unlock over 30 courses and 20 golfers.

4 Reservoir Dogs
Level select

At the Cheats menu under the Extras option, press L2, R2, L2, R2, L1, L1 and press START. A level select option will now be available at the Cheats menu.

5 Destroy All Humans 2
Hidden movie

Pause the game and select Movies. Then hold L3 and press ✕, □, △, ○, □, ○, △, ✕, ✕ to see a film of Crypto and Pox reminiscing about the events in the original game.

ON THE DISC
Our review of *Pro Evo 6 PSP* will be on next month's disc

FEATURE ON ONLINE

PES6 v FIFA 2007 – which is the best for online play?

Dave Meikleham

Pub Konami
Dev Konami
FYI PS2 | 2006 | PSM80 91%
The least evolved *Evolution* yet, and ironically, probably the best. A slower, more physical and realistic simulation of football's highs and lows. Sad about the licensing, though. We honestly think it's better than the Xbox 360 version, mind – and many Xbox mag folk secretly agree.

There are only two footie games that matter on PS2 – with Konami's *PES6* the clear choice for the discerning gamer. These two galacticos enjoy a running battle each year – *FIFA* continuously secures authentic licenses, from the Premier League to the World Cup to the Champions League, while *PES* concentrates on tinkering with the magic match engine to increase the realism.

Offline, both of them play a great game of football, but both titles have consistently underperformed in online play, with no clear winner. A few years ago, *FIFA 2004* kicked things off with straight one-on-one games, with only a bit of 'lag' – the technical term for when the game's graphics run slower than your controls due to the speed of the internet connection, creating an annoying delay in response. Sadly, EA had to strip the visuals to down to the bare polygons to ensure it remained relatively lag-free. The two *FIFA* sequels since have gradually got better-looking, but the game remains the same. On Konami's side, *PES5* suffers badly from a case of Jekyll and Hyde syndrome – you'll play one half entirely lag-free, but the other is gridlocked by it.

With new versions of both games, who will claim the online crown? EA are confident, announcing that they "don't know why *PES* has lag problems" since they found network play easy to implement. But Konami are making the boldest claim, saying it will be possible for four versus four matches to take place on *PES6* (compared to *FIFA 07*'s two-player maximum) – completely lag-free.

The mind games are over – it's time to settle this. Over the next few pages, we've devised a series of rigorous tests to take each game through its paces and decide once and for all who deserves the title of online champion. Stay tuned. You might be in for a surprise.

Pub Konami
Dev Konami
FYI PS2 | 2006 | PSM80 84%
They've finally sorted out the tricks and flicks, while basic passing is a genuine rival for *PES*. In fairness, it may even be the better single player game, due to the engrossing Manager Mode, plus inclusion of licensed lower league clubs and hordes of authentic competitions.

FIFA 2007 Defining moment

It's not far behind *Pro Evolution Soccer 6* in terms of gameplay these days, but what can *FIFA 07* offer the online party? Here's how a typical match pans out...

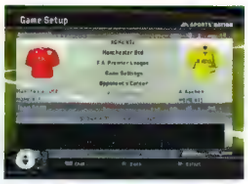
Apart from some beautiful free-kicks, about 90% of all goals are scored along the ground – no matter how much we raise the power bar. It's got to be just an online thing, because offline we can hammer them into the top corner until the cows come home. Very peculiar indeed.

Why EA allow you to pause the game any time while in possession is anyone's guess. Sure you can only do it three times, but imagine the sheer frustration as you're just about to win the ball back and the other player decides he's going to make some changes in the pause menu. That's loser behaviour.

The beautifully-crafted player likenesses and kits are here. But while it doesn't have a particularly bad lag, *FIFA* has the odd drop in frame-rate , which makes dribbling a chore.

Despite heavily criticising your play, the commentary from Martin Tyler and Andy Gray really adds a great deal of life to the online proceedings.

Although the there's the option to use a USB headset to chat to your rivals, not many people do. Not much trash talk happens, which is a shame.



1 ESPN Ticker

The most interesting feature of *FIFA 07* is the scrolling media bar that runs through the menu screens. While you're sat waiting for a game or fiddling with the settings, you'll see the latest football news delivered direct from ESPN's Soccernet.com. From upcoming fixtures and past results to transfer speculation and player injuries, the ticker (that's the fancy word for streaming news text) has the lot. Expect this to become a key feature in all EA Sports titles on PS3.

2 Interactive League

While you can take on people just for fun, *FIFA 07* allows you to represent your favoured club in an Interactive league. You register as your chosen club (like Man Yoo) along with other like minded fans. Then, when one of their Premiership fixtures comes up – say against Chelsea – you log-on and play Man United vs. Chelsea matches with Blues fans. The set of fans that wins the most games will see their team gain three points and charge up the faux-Premier league table.

Current world champion

Top of the FIFA07 online rankings is the curiously-named I OF A KIND. This fella has racked up 3072 points with an astonishing 157 wins, three draws and eight losses. Although despite being online while we were, he kept on refusing a game.. Scared? Probably.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6 Defining moment

It continues to rule the offline pitch, but take it online and *Pro Evolution Soccer* still feels more broken than a Wayne Rooney metatarsal. This is what you'll get at kick-off...

Has the lag gone? We've played silky smooth single player games during 'off peak' times (early morning) but some of our two-player co-op matches – including one *disastrous* Friday evening – have been worse than ever, with one half near-unplayable. Jury's out.

On a 'good' day, when the servers are quiet, it's now possible to rifle home shots just like you would in single player *PES*. This means the variety and style of your goals is as pleasingly varied as offline matches and you're unlikely to score the same goal twice.

Unlike *FIFA*, you can only pause the action when the ball has run out of play, meaning there's no chance of cheats dipping into the menu while you're running through on goal.

The comedy pairing of Brooking and Brackley have failed to make it. Music to most gamers' ears, but we'll still miss sir Trev telling us how boring our 4-4 draws are. Oh, well.

Unlike its online rival, *PES* fails to support USB headsets. You can still type childish messages at your opponent during replays and when the game is paused.

1 Stats not Fair

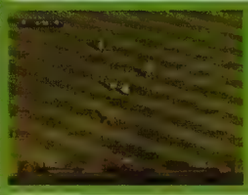
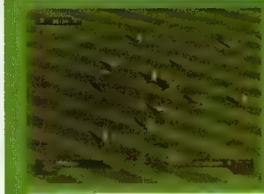
Once you finish an online match the result is logged and can be viewed at anytime from your profile screen. Unfortunately, perhaps due to teething problems with Konami's servers, the game has a horrible tendency to crash mid-match. This is especially annoying if the connection gets lost while you're three up and coasting. What's worse, if you're hosting the match *PES* will decide that you quit early and marks the result as a loss. Truly maddening.

2 League of its own

This is one area where *FIFA* is streets ahead of *PES*. While you do play in a league, and can go up and down divisions depending on results, the end product is a lot less satisfying or user-interactive than *FIFA*'s effort. Where EA's title gives you a genuine incentive by helping you push your own club's rank up the table, *PES* feels a little soulless and disconnected in comparison. It's perfectly functional but just lacks *FIFA*'s scope and ambition.

Current world champion

The current king of kickabouts is Guglielmo. He has 165 wins, over twice that of his closest rival. He's also put together a staggering winning streak of 63 games – eat your heart out, Gunners. Now that's a *PES* player. Will last year's PES rankings champions rise to the challenge?

	Pro Evolution Soccer 6		FIFA 2007	
Ease of Use	At the moment, the *PES6* servers are an absolute nightmare to get onto and getting one game going can be as much as a challenge as playing it. Surely Konami will fix this? [crosses fingers] **Score: 4 out of 10**			It's fairly annoying having to register with EA for one of their special online accounts. But once you're signed up you can log straight onto the servers with minimum of fuss. **Score: 8 out of 10**
Number of Players Online	There are a plenty of servers and lobbies to find fellow *PES* players in, and there are usually hundreds of them. Plus you can even play against people playing on PC. **Score: 8 out of 10**			There's a constant crowd of players on the *FIFA 07* servers, but we found most of them were reluctant to play games unless you were their friends. **Score: 6 out of 10**
Extras	While it can't compete with *FIFA*'s fancy features, *PES6* has more tournaments and leagues than its EA rival. You can even be a spectator in games if you're a bit rubbish and just want to watch. **Score: 6 out of 10**			You've got the quality interactive leagues, the ESPN news ticker and the ability to host your very own podcasts. Should you wish to do so. **Score: 9 out of 10**
Comms	Strap in a USB keyboard and you can set your insults or congratulatory comments. You can also use the rather clunky method of typing messages with your controller. No voice-chat, though. **Score: 6 out of 10**			You can use a USB headset to really stick it to your opponent while online. You can't plug in a keyboard to type insults, but you don't need to if you've got a headset, do you? **Score: 6 out of 10**
Graphics	There's no noticeable drop in quality from single player and all strips and likenesses survive online. You can even switch camera angles with the shoulder buttons, which is a nice touch. **Score: 8 out of 10**			The beautifully crafted models are still as solid as in the offline games. Unfortunately running with the ball towards the touchline can be frustrating as the players always run it out. **Score: 7 out of 10**
Lag	Some games are lag-free, while some suffer the old 'good half, bad half' syndrome we think Konami were surprised by the number of users, crippling their servers. **Score: 7 out of 10**			While *FIFA 07* doesn't have particularly bad lag like *PES* sometimes has, it does still drop in frame-rate almost every game you play in. **Score: 8 out of 10**
Gameplay	It plays almost exactly like the offline mode, but obviously falls some way short of getting a few mates together for a multi-tap session. It's a worthy substitute for lonely nights in, though. **Score: 8 out of 10**			Putting the boot into our foreign cousins in *FIFA 07* feels as satisfying as it does offline. You can link together beautiful moves and display your skills without too much fuss. **Score: 5 out of 10**
Overall Verdict	Getting a game online can be as slow as Teddy Sheringham in a pair of lead boots. The servers aren't at their peak just yet, but *Pro Evo 6* could be of Champions League quality if they can fix it. **Score: 6 out of 10**			To be honest, we weren't terribly won over by the interactive leagues, but the bells and whistles that go with *FIFA* make it entertaining. Plus it has the bonus of running commentary. *FIFA* wins. **Score: 7 out of 10**

Score	
0-1	Graphics
1-1	No of Players, Graphics
1-2	No of Players, Graphics, Extras
2-3	No of Players, Graphics, Extras, Comms
3-3	No of Players, Graphics, Comms, Extras, Graphics, Comms
3-4	No of Players, Graphics, Comms, Extras, Graphics, Comms, Lag
4-4	No of Players, Graphics, Comms, Extras, Graphics, Comms, Gameplay, Lag
4-5	No of Players, Graphics, Comms, Extras, Graphics, Comms, Gameplay, Lag, Overall

Final Score 4-5

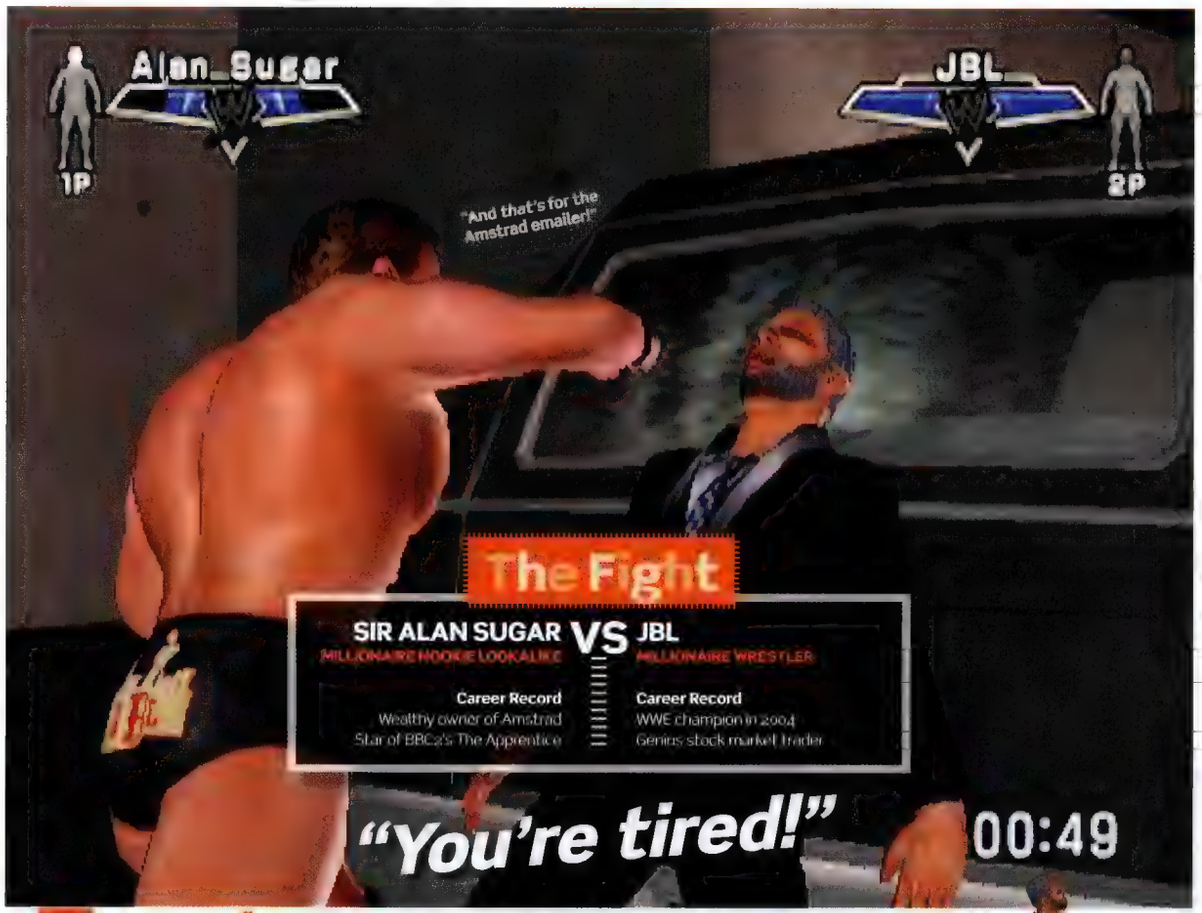
ONLINE VERDICT

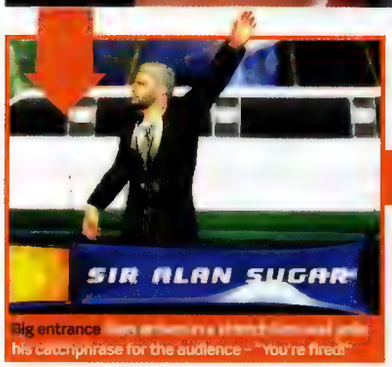
Winner? For speed of use alone, it has to be *FIFA 06*. But *PES6* is *potentially* better.
The future? If the *PES6* servers get sorted out, you'll be first to know

PLAYSTATION FACE-OFF

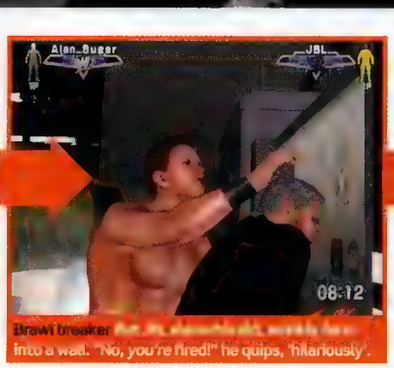
Deliver sweet justice to Sir Alan Sugar in WWE Smackdown

Andy Kelly

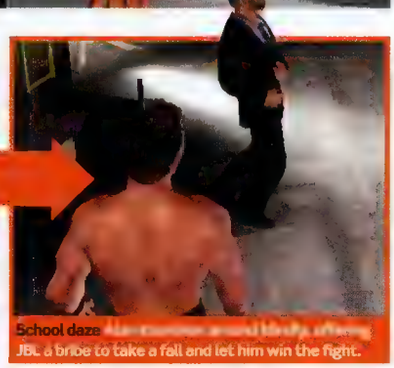




Big entrance Sir arrives in a stretch limousine and delivers his catchphrase for the audience – "You're fired!"



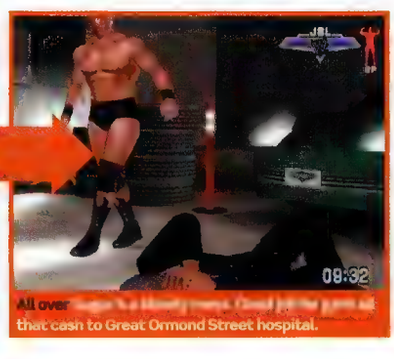
Brawl breaker Sir, in character, quickly has JBL into a wall. "No, you're fired!" he quips, 'hilariously'.



School daze Alan storms around blindly, allowing JBL a brief to take a fall and let him win the fight.

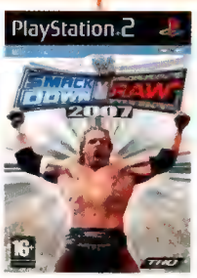
Head first Infuriated, wealthy investor Sir Alan Sugar's head into the bonnet of a car. Whack!

Dirt bag JBL was sick to death of the people he upsets on The Apprentice. Justice!



All over Sugar's bloody money. Good job he gave all that cash to Great Ormond Street hospital.

USE SMACKDOWN 2007



Go to	Create A Wrestler mode
Editing Tip	Input items in order given as some effects rely on layer stacking

MAKE SIR ALAN!

Morphing Menu	
Head	(5, 21, 9, -44)
Eyebrows	(0, 12, -77, 0)
Eyes	(100, 84, 24, -99, -35, 78)
Nose	(26, 0, 61, 46, 0, 0, -3, 0)
Cheek	(53, 67, 29, -56)
Mouth	(98, -41, 89, 21, 0, 4, 51)
Jaw	(51, -80, 88, 67)
Age	59
Morphing Continued Menus	
Hair	34/91 (91, 51, 44, 90)
Eyes	22/27 (89, 73, 33)
Eyebrows	56/48 (89, 16, 7, 58)
Lips	7/85 (98, 50, 50, 100)
Face skin	3/8
Eyelids	9/22 (92, 58, 10)
Body Menu	
Body Type	Ripped/Thick +14
Outfit Menu	
Torso 1	Shirts 23/41
Torso 2	Jackets 56/58
Feet Menu	
Shoes	9/47
Biography	
Name	Sir Alan Sugar
Nickname	Unsweetened Sugar
Signs	Union Jack
Announcer Name	The Professional

Example Hair 12/91 (0,0,10) means use Hair 12 of the choice of 91 leave first two values as normal, change length to 10. Leave items without values as default.

email us Who should we twat?
Mail psm3@futurenet.co.uk

ON THE DISC

PLAYSTATION CLASSIC

Why the best squad shooter on PS2 is Freedom Fighters

Nathan Irvine

Pub EA | **Dev** IO
FYI PS2 | 2003 | PSM40 90%
The Soviet Union is trying to take over the US and only one man stands in their way. A plumber. Top squad action.

Talk about wrong place, wrong time. One minute Chris Stone is chatting to his brother about the plumbing job in hand, dismissing his claims that the Soviet Union are about to invade the US... and the next he's dodging bullets as a Soviet helicopter fires both barrels into the apartment with dodgy drains. It's a bit of a stroke of bad luck that they were fixing the sink of an ex-spy and current Soviet target, really. Then, as if things weren't already bad, the Commies kidnap his brother and make off. Six seconds later, Chris has linked up with his fellow American freedom fighters to fight the Red Army. And so begins the best squad game on PS2.

Almost every team-based shooter from *The Thing* to *Brothers In Arms* tried to capture the ease that *Freedom Fighters* dealt with barking orders to your buddies and none of them got it quite right. Standard orders like "go there and blow up that tank" are, in certain games, twisted around complicated series of button presses – and even then your AI buddies often become riddled with bullets as they forget to return fire on the way. But in *Freedom Fighters* everything is simple and effective. Your commands are 'attack', 'defend' and 'regroup'. That's it. You only even get to actually command a unit when Chris builds up his charisma by completing admirable tasks like blowing up bridges and rescuing poorly prisoners of war. Once you're suitably charismatic you can assemble a group of brainless – yet willing – troops and send them into battle, and you'll get an enormous sense of accomplishment as each one mercilessly guns down their target. If we're honest, your team can have moments of sheer stupidity, sometimes failing to follow an order even if you jab the command button until Chris goes hoarse from shouting. But, when it goes right, it's incredibly satisfying.

EMAIL PSM3 @
What do you think of FF? Let us know.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

A game for all seasons

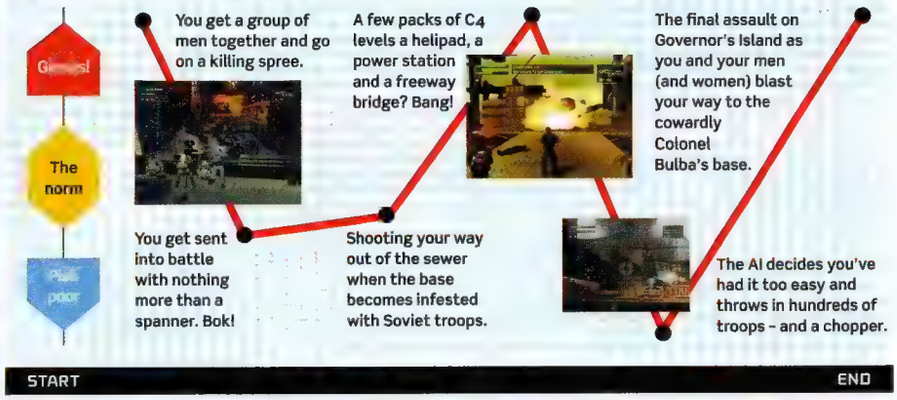
But while there's a hell of a lot of it, ordering your men off on relentless killing sprees isn't the only thing that marks *Freedom*

The defining moment...

Commanding your troops

Just like Hannibal from the A-Team, we love it when a plan comes together – and no more so than in *Freedom Fighters*. The simple act ordering your troops to different locations and then triggering an ambush is even more fulfilling than doing the killing yourself. It does take a bit of trial and error before you're bossing people about to perfection, but get it right and you won't have to fire a shot.

The *Freedom Fighters* Thrill-O-Graph


Genius!
The norm
Plain poor
You get a group of men together and go on a killing spree.
A few packs of C4 levels a helipad, a power station and a freeway bridge? Bang!
The final assault on Governor's Island as you and your men (and women) blast your way to the cowardly Colonel Bulba's base.
You get sent into battle with nothing more than a spanner. Bok!
Shooting your way out of the sewer when the base becomes infested with Soviet troops.
The AI decides you've had it too easy and throws in hundreds of troops – and a chopper.
START
END

Fighters down as a PS2 legend. The vast and sprawling war-zone, a faux New York, looks gorgeous as the seasons change from sweltering summer hazes to snow-strewn winter storms effortlessly and while there's barely a second to savour these moments (remember all the killing you've got to do?) it adds a real glow to the game and makes you feel as if you're right there. These subtle touches show a gentler side to *Freedom Fighters*.

Meanwhile, no other game has ever made us scratch around desperately for a medikit because one of our number has come a cropper in the battlefield. This is another great thing about *Freedom Fighters*. You build such an affinity with your troops (even though they're personality vacuums) and feel a distinct sense of responsibility when they're lying wounded in need of some medical care. You can even rescue sickly Soviet defectors and they'll join up to strike back at Ivan, though we'd rather save our squad selection for the US troops than have these fickle turncoats on our side.

Charging into Soviet strongholds with your gun-toting gang creates a feeling of togetherness like no other squad-based game, as your clan cover you while picking off the Red troops. And while the act of hoisting the USA flag to signal victory on each stage is sickeningly patriotic enough to make even a hardened American feel queasy, you still feel all smug having torn away one of Ivan's precious terrains. Our only gripe is the lack of vehicles to play with. Heck, we'd have taken a scooter with a couple of sidewinder missiles strapped to it if nothing else.

We want more

It's been three long years since it came out, but ever since fans and critics alike have dreamed of a sequel to *Freedom Fighters* – yet despite a twist at the end that leaves the door open for a sequel, the chances seem slim. The game didn't exactly shift, and IO are coining it in from *Hitman* and probably too busy working on *Kane And Lynch* for the next-gen machines to even think about it. Still, it's testament to how good *Freedom Fighters* feels that those that have played it remember it so fondly. It's a game that might not look much on the surface, but affects everyone who gives it a chance. So if you haven't already, why don't you do the same?

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? Because you've played countless squad-based shooters and they're all a bit mufty.
Final thought If a sequel does emerge, it could be the stuff of dreams. Fingers crossed

The Top 5 'Fighters facts

1 It got a name change
Freedom Fighters was very nearly released under the name *Freedom: Soldiers Of Liberty*.

2 The squad commands could be making a comeback
Rumour has it IO, are using the simple tactical commands for their up-coming next-gen title, *Kane And Lynch*.

3 It's littered with *Hitman* references
You'll notice posters of Agent 47 throughout. He's on movie prints and can be seen advertising menswear too. Lookin' good, 47.

4 The box art is embarrassingly drab
What *were* EA thinking? A bloke looking nothing like Chris, all in a charcoal style. No wonder it didn't sell.

5 The voice cast is full of stars
Andre Sogliuzzo (the voice of Tony Montana in *Scarface*) and David Thomas (The Sorrow from *MGS3*) both lend their voices to *Freedom Fighters*.

UK's best new game idea is... Raindrop Racer

Everyone has an idea for a great game. But could they make a game? That was the premise of UK-based developer Free Radical's 'Gong of Terror' night at the recent Game City event in Nottingham, where the public were invited to pitch their ideas to an expert panel including Free Radical Producer Dave Doak (of *GoldenEye* and *TimeSplitters* fame). Twist? When the idea became boring, they were gonged off stage by an actual semi-naked man, like the famous US TV talent show The Gong Show.

About 300 people turned up on the night, with initially depressing results – amid dire-sounding 'free-roaming' rip-offs, the low point was someone who pitched '*GTA* in prison', with a button for 'dropping the soap' and another for performing the love that daren't speak its name. Only one game avoided the gong – Simon Vickers' Lederhosen-powered rhythm-action game, which recreated the fun of a Bavarian beer hall using an authentic trouser peripheral with pressure sensitive thigh patches. But the winner was a raindrop racing simulator – set on a window pane – where you control external factors like wind/moisture, and use magnifying glasses to heat up your opponents' raindrop ("Like *Mario Kart*, but with drops of water," explains Rob). Both chaps won internships with Free Radical, though – sadly – neither game is likely to see light of day. Shame.

PLAYSTATION NATION

PLAYER 1

PLAYER 2

P2

P1

"Use a magnifying glass to heat up your rival"

Meet the semi-naked gong master

FINISH LINE

Gong, Strong, Wrong Free Radical's Dave Doak applauds a rare good idea (top, far left)

...The LocoRocos are just plain old yellow, sadly.

Get a Halloween Loco Roco level – for free

It's a month late. But you can capture next year's Halloween spirit by downloading this exclusive *LocoRoco* level from www.yourpsp.co.uk – completely free. All you need is a Mac/PC, an internet connection, a PSP, a mini-USB cable (as given away free with PSM3 issue 78) and, or, a memory stick. Connect your PSP to your computer (select Settings>USB Connection from the PSP menu), log onto the website (you'll need your PSP's serial number to register) and follow the instructions. The exclusive *LocoRoco* Halloween level loads direct from the memory stick, but you'll need Firmware 2.82 (also available on the website). The level features floating pumpkins, haunted house-style rotating puzzles and flying ghosts (instead of the floating bubble stream). The website also lets you download free demos including *Ridge Racer 2*, *Moto GP* and *World Tour Soccer 2*, plus a host of exclusive videos and eclectic music files – from The Autobots to The Dears. Exclusive news: Sony will be giving away a Christmas-themed *LocoRoco* level – but our pleas for making the main character an ever-expanding, cheesy-grinned Christmas pudding are falling on deaf ears. Keep checking www.yourpsp.co.uk for details.

Pudding it about how the Christmas-themed character should, but probably won't, look

DAMAGE

PSP abusers resort to guns, dogs and eggs

Happy slapping? Pfft. The latest trend for violent, phone-wielding, malcontents is smashing up PSPs in a variety of explosive, eccentric and self-defeating ways. A cursory YouTube search for 'PSP smashing' reveals a huge number of videos dedicated to blowing up the £149 handheld: from the banal (stamps, kicks, whacking on a table) to the tool-assisted (hammers, cars, dragging at speed) to the absolutely mental (fireworks, guns). Our favourite, for sheer unpredictable futility, is the Japanese man who fried his PSP in an omelette and tried to sell it on Yahoo Auctions. Fully boxed, of course. At the time of going to press, the top bid was 7140 Yen (about £32). We hate the waste, but love the notion of capitalism – literally – eating itself.

1 Japanese PSP omelette

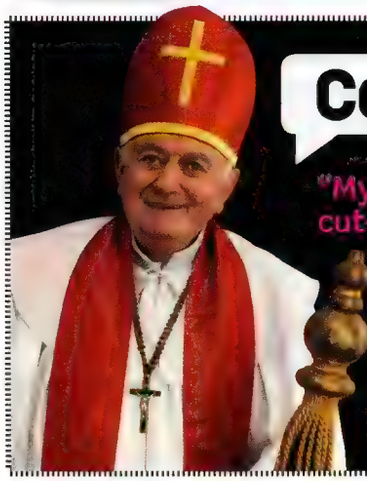
There it is – a technological marvel with, erm, a rubbish D-pad, bubbling in a hot pan of eggy batter. We'd make an obvious point about global wealth inequality and starving children about now, if we weren't so busy whipping our PSX into a lightly-whipped choux bun.

2 Shooting PSP with a gun

Hundreds of millions of years ago, the universe became infinitely dense, creating the big bang and the humbling miracle of life. Today we're watching an american kid blow up PSP with dynamite and a sniper rifle. Makes you think.

3 Tragic PSP dog attack

As spoilt, apathetic American kids and/or tragically deluded Nintendo fanboys blow up PSPs for fun and broadcast it on the internet, one inconsolable PSM3 readers writes to us complaining that his dog has eaten his PSP. Didn't, er, get that from Yahoo Auctions by any chance did you?



Confess!

"My MGS3 Christmas cut-scene hell"

By: Daniel Dawkins
Bath

EMAIL PSM3 @
Got a confession? Then we'll print it. Email us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

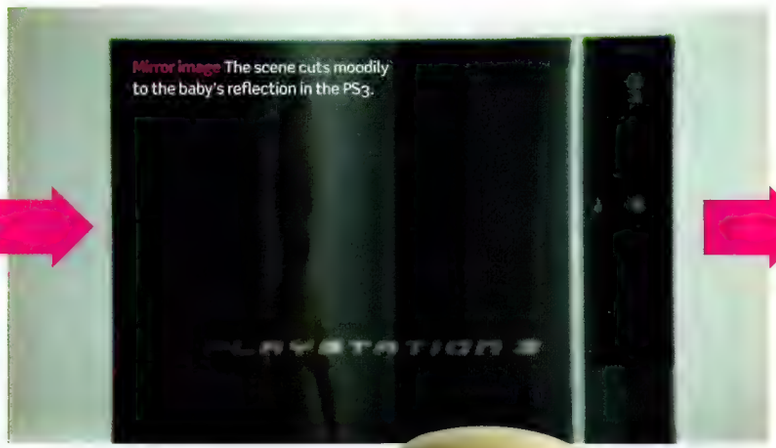
What's ails you my son?
After opening my pressies on Christmas day, I had a few hours to kill before Top Of The Pops. So I unwrapped that import copy of *MGS3*...

So what's the problem?
Initially, nothing. I made good progress and by 2pm had reached the bit where Snake gets captured and tortured by Volgin. The *second* the epic cut-scene began, my Mum put Xmas dinner on the table after slaving over a hot stove for five hours.

Why not stop the game?
That's the problem – you can't. I hadn't saved the game beforehand and needed to watch the cut-scene to keep up with the story – or face replaying the game for six hours. If it was a regular in-game cut-scene or, say, JFK on DVD it would've been OK, but Kojima likes to waffle.

What happened?
After ignoring countless angry shouts, I turned up for dinner 20 mins late, ate a plate of cold brussel sprouts while sat on my own at a table littered with pulled crackers, then skulked silently back to my room. I finished the game at 4.38am that night, but it took *slightly* longer than the cut-scene for my family to speak to me again. In retrospect, it was a low ebb.

Bare necessities The ad starts with the naked baby staring at PS3.


Mirror image The scene cuts moodily to the baby's reflection in the PS3.

Mental china baby flogs PS3

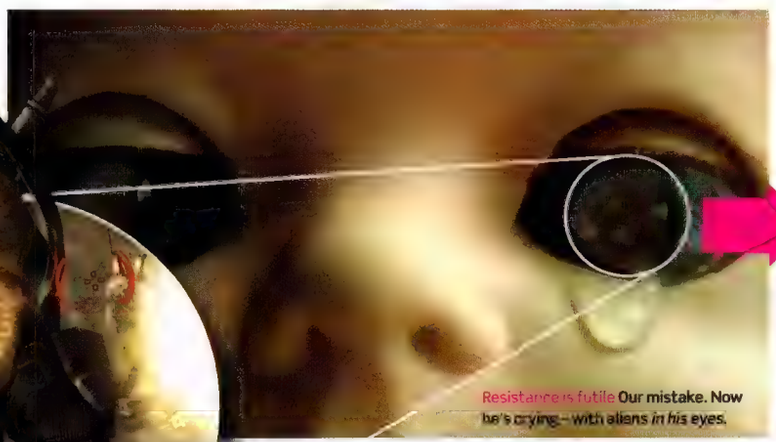
Dan Dawkins

If nothing else, Sony's chilling new commercial for PS3 makes their previous efforts look sane. And, yes, that includes David Lynch's ad where a man with a floating head sits with a bandaged humanoid on a settee while a talking duck in a suit quacks 'Welcome to the Third Place'. The new ads were the brainchild of respected advertising agency TBWA/Chiat/Day, and – typically – Sony US boss Kaz Hirai thinks they're the perfect way to introduce people to PS3.

"Good, bad, or indifferent, you are going to have an emotional reaction to that ad," says Kaz. "I want that kind of emotional swelling to be a reflection of what we're trying to accomplish with PS3." The 'crying baby' ad began life as something far more complicated – a room in which objects were mysteriously transformed by PS3. A sofa would soar across the room and stick to the wall. Chairs would bleed. The agency eventually decided to 'simplify' the idea, with the PS3 appearing to 'possess' the baby, who experiences a whirlwind of emotions.

Purists shouldn't scoff – the ad actually contains game footage, albeit literally in the blink of the eye, as a microsecond of *Resistance: Fall of Man* flashes in the baby's iris. "We know people will be taping these commercials and freeze-framing them," explains Brett Craig, a creative director at the LA office of TBWA/Chiat/Day. This approach, with its huge viral marketing potential, was at the heart of the campaign, as were PS3 ad billboards containing cryptic codes that unlock videos on www.PlayB3yond.com. Madness.

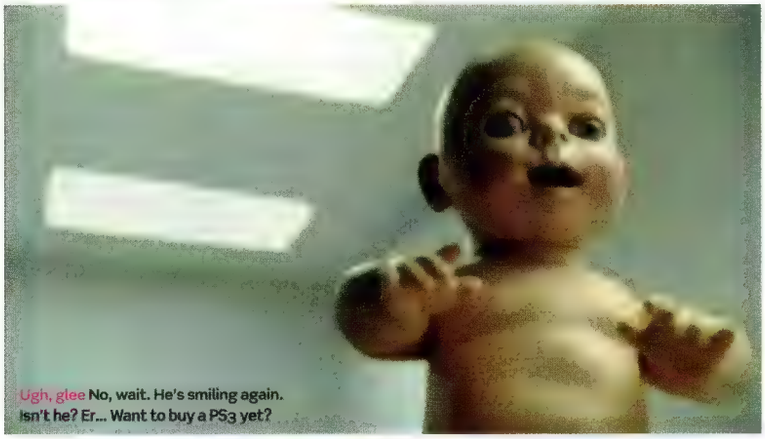
Fear we go Suddenly, the babus starts looking sad, and things go bendy...


Resistance is futile Our mistake. Now he's crying – with aliens *in his eyes*.

Sweet dreams This is actually a picture of Milf after the PS3 delay bombshell.

Play for forgiveness The ad ends – but you can still see the demon baby. Yike.

Early gunning centre The baby 'smiles' – and we do a bit of wee in our pants.



Ugh, glee No, wait. He's smiling again. Isn't he? Er... Want to buy a PS3 yet?

Better date than never Wonder if they'll use the baby in the UK TV ads?

Saps enough The Society Against PlayStation – a bit shit, really

Sony's maddest adverts ever

SAPS (Society Against PlayStation)

In which some patronising American goon warns us of the danger of PlayStation in the style of a 1960s public information film – he'll need to keep those gloves to avoid getting fingerprints on PS3.

Double Life

It's hard to forget the little Scottish kid who quietly boasts that he has 'conquered worlds'. One of the best Sony campaigns ever, we reckon. And the scary blokes in papier mache masks? And the nudey pregnant lady? Beautiful.

The Third Place

There he is – the Third Place duck. Yes, *duck*. This David Lynch (of Twin Peaks fame) directed TV ad for PS2 set a new benchmark for 'weird', establishing PS2 as an edgy netherworld outside of work and play – hence the 'Third Place'. Yes.

ON THE DISC
Check out the PS2 reviews section for the latest games

PS2 Playlist

FIRST CHOICE | SECOND CHOICE | THIRD CHOICE

ACTION

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS
Pub Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar | **Web** gta-sanandreas.com

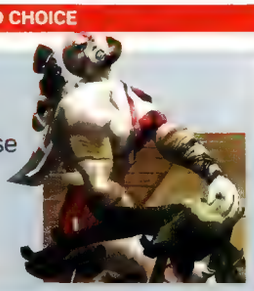
"*GTA*'s not perfect, but it's the single greatest achievement on PS2. You may not love it, but you have to respect it."
PSM3 Rating 99%

CANIS CANEM EDIT
Pub Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar
Web rockstargames.com

"Jimmy is one of the most charismatic characters ever. It goes right to the top of the class"
PSM3 Rating 93%

GOD OF WAR
Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony
Web godofwargame.com

"Epic, defined by dense environments and an unparalleled sense of personal empowerment."
PSM3 Rating 92%

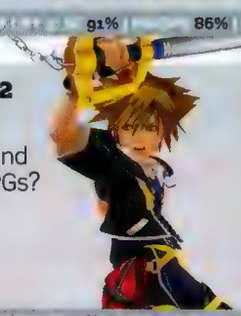


91% | 86% | 88% | 92% | 90% | 92% | 69% | 91%

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

KINGDOM HEARTS 2
Pub Square Enix | **Dev** Square Enix
Web khz.co.uk

"Excels on every level and sweats charm. Hate RPGs? This could well change your mind."
PSM3 Rating 94%



DRAGON QUEST
Pub Square Enix | **Dev** Level 5
Web dragonquest8.com

"An old-fashioned game that eschews modern trends in favour of vintage role-playing."
PSM3 Rating 90%

ROGUE GALAXY
Pub Sony | **Dev** Level 5 **Web** | level5.co.jp

"No startling leap forward, really, but every single element of the game is a joy to play. Wondrous."
PSM3 Rating 90%

90% | 90% | 90% | 85% | DISGAEA 81% | STAR OCEAN 85%

RETRO

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA ANTHOLOGY
Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Web capcom.com

"This is worth the asking price for *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and *Pocket Fighter* alone. Best *SF* experience on PS2."
PSM3 Rating 80%

ALIEN HOMINID
Pub Zoo Digital | **Dev** The Behemoth | **Web** alienhominid.com

"*Hominid* really makes you work. Every minute you stay alive is an achievement almost unparalleled."
PSM3 Rating 74%

MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 2
Pub Midway | **Dev** Midway | **Web** midwayarcade.com

"Got rose-tinted spectacles hanging from a sagging face? This is a bargain."
PSM3 Rating 71%

79% | 83% | 84% | 84%

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

TIMESPLITTERS 2
Pub Eidos | **Dev** Free Radical
Web eidos.co.uk

"Every bullet leaves a scar or impact point, every object can be interacted with or destroyed. Brilliant."
PSM3 Rating 95%

HALF-LIFE
Pub Vivendi | **Dev** Valve | **Web** valvesoftware.com

"The monsters are brilliantly designed, with each one matching a particular weapon that spells their deaths."
PSM3 Rating 90%

BLACK
Pub EA | **Dev** Criterion | **Web** black.ea.com

"*Black* offers unparalleled explosive thrills, but it lacks somewhat in context or emotional depth."
PSM3 Rating 89%

88% | 86% | 87% | 85% | 90% | 80% | JAMES BOND: AGENT 88%

Homage Can't wait until *GTA4*? No need. Try these instead...

SWEARY

Scarface – The World Is Yours
Pub Vivendi | **Dev** Radical
Web scarfacegame.com

An exercise in excess, *Scarface* comes with loud explosions, louder shirts, bikini-clad ladies, big flash cars, the best Al Pacino impression ever and more profanities than you can imagine. Ace.
PSM3 Rating 89%

MASSIVE

Just Cause
Pub Eidos | **Dev** Avalanche
Web eidosinteractive.co.uk

20 times larger than *GTA: San Andreas*, though this can simply mean a lot of trekking from one side of the map to the other. Still, one of the finest *GTA* impersonators out there, and full of obscene weaponry. Well worth a look.
PSM3 Rating 78%

EDUCATIONAL

Canis Canem Edit
Pub Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar
Web rockstargames.com

The best *GTA*-alike, naturally enough, comes from Rockstar themselves, but the school location refreshes the experience no end. Kiss girls, hit teachers, let off stink bombs, smash windows... stacks to see and do. Wonderful.
PSM3 Rating 93%

Disagree with our choices? Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word-bombs at: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

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What were they thinking?

They released it... No-one bought it. Here's why

Amplitude

Pub Sony | **Dev** Harmonix
Web harmonixmusic.com

These days, Harmonix are world-renowned for *Guitar Hero*, a commercial and critical success that made them very rich, but a few years back nobody gave a hoot about them or their games. They released *Amplitude* in 2003 and, while it was well-received by the press, it sold barely anything. In it you have to build up a song piece by piece, from the basic drum beat and bass loop to the vocals and other instruments. Artists featured in the game include David Bowie, Run DMC, Pink, Slipknot, Blink 182, Herbie Hancock and Weezer, all of whom deconstructed their songs so the developers could piece them together in-game. But even with such a broad spectrum of music, the game was never going to be a hit.

One problem was the box. It was a picture of a speaker with some band names popping out of it and so bland and featureless that shoppers would pass right by it. If we were in charge, we'd have had a bikini-clad lovely squeezing the band names between her breasts. At least then people might have given the thing a second look. But most importantly of all, it's a rhythm action game. Many don't find the prospect of tapping buttons in time to music to be particularly exciting – uless they're doing it with a plastic Gibson SG, of course – and passed the game up in favour of *Urban Racer 4B*. A shame, though, because they missed one of PS2's best rhythm-actioners. Track it down, that's our advice.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want to champion a game here? Let us know.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

PlayStation 2 Top 20

This month's big retail winners and losers

01	(01)	**FIFA 07**	EA	Reviewed PSM80 84%
02	(03)	**Lego Star Wars 2**	Eidos	Reviewed PSM79 91%
03	(03)	**Kingdom Hearts 2**	Square Enix	Reviewed PSM80 94%
04	(02)	**Tiger Woods 07**	EA	Reviewed PSM80 77%
05	(05)	**Just Cause**	Eidos	Reviewed PSM80 78%
06	(06)	**LMA Manager 2007**	Codemasters	Reviewed PSM79 74%
07	(07)	**Cars**	THQ	Reviewed PSM78 70%
08	NEW	**Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence**	Sony	Reviewed PSM78 93
09	(09)	**Pirates Of The Caribbean**	Ubisoft	Reviewed PSM79 47%
10	(11)	**Buzz: The Big Quiz**	Sony	Reviewed PSM68 74%
11	(08)	**Ace Combat: The Belkan War**	Namco	Reviewed PSM78 74%
12	(10)	**Yakuza**	Sega	Reviewed PSM70 79%
13	(12)	**Over The Hedge**	Activision	Reviewed PSM77 70%
14	(16)	**Tomb Raider Legend**	Eidos	Reviewed PSM74 81%
15	(01)	**Superbikes Riding Challenge**	Black Bean	Reviewed PSM80 64%
16	NEW	**Open Season**	Ubisoft	Reviewed N/A
17	(18)	**Monster House**	THQ	Reviewed PSM79 52%
18	(15)	**Madden 07**	EA	Reviewed PSM79 85%
19	(17)	**Reservoir Dogs**	Eidos	Reviewed PSM80 74%
20	NEW	**NBA Live 07**	EA	Reviewed N/A

Want it? Tick it!

Tiger, your tee's ready...

Chocks away

Hmm. Short shorts

Our hearts will go on

Kingdom Hearts 2 – even people who hate RPGs seem to love this, and rightly so. One of the games of the year, without a shadow of a doubt.

Solid gold

A decent showing for *Subsistence* – the *MGS* online servers are getting crowded. Hey, aren't there lots of good games in the charts this month?

Get on yer bike

Oh. Well, there *are* lots of good games. But there's also mediocre tat like *Superbikes* selling more than it should. We know bike games are scarce, but *really*...

6,000,000

The number of PlayStation 3s Sony plan to have shipped by the end of 2007.

You're playing...

Jim Powell
We *think* Jim's the one on the right of this picture...

1 **Tiger Woods 2001** "The best-ever version of this game. You can keep the fancy stuff from later titles."
2 **Kingdom Hearts 2** "As a lifelong *Final Fantasy* fan and lover of Disney, this is like heaven to me."
3 **Soul Calibur 3** "I am unstoppable as Astaroth or Mitsurugi. I used to love *Tekken* before I played this."

We're playing...

Daniel Dawkins
PSM3's Dep Ed enjoys slapping ladies' bums. In games, of course.

1 **Pro Evolution Soccer 6** "I still play Master League while cursing the unprovable match 'bending'."
2 **Lego Star Wars 2** "My heart always melts every time I see mini Han Solo's cheeky wink."
3 **God Hand** "Smack the bottoms of naughty ladies and punch bosses 300 feet through windows? Ace."

They're playing...

Sophie Blakemore
Creative Assembly lady, of *Spartan: Total Warrior* fame.

1 **Shadow Of The Colossus** "I'm still savouring the last few beasties. Just wonderful."
2 **Lumines** "Still a great game that eats up hours at a time. Love chilling to the music."
3 **WipeOut Pure** "You've gotta love the old-school flying experience. Still great fun."

ON THE DISC
Want to see the latest PSP

PSP Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
FOOTBALL	**FOOTBALL MANAGER HANDHELD 2007** **Pub** Sega | **Dev** Sports Interactive **Web** sigames.com "Takes last year's version and builds on it. Exceeds expectations and stands tall." **PSM3 Rating** 86% 79%	**FIFA '06** **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA **Web** easports.com/games/fifa06 "The camera works well, the atmosphere is realistic and the Season mode provides great depth. Good stuff." **PSM3 Rating** 81% 78%	**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami **Web** pesfan.com "The cramped camera and fiddly controls hamper your game. A decent effort, but just wide of the mark." **PSM3 Rating** 80%
BEAT-'EM-UPS	**TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Namco **Web** tekken.net "Grabs you and doesn't let go. This is how all handheld scrapping should be. An essential buy." **PSM3 Rating** 89% 71%	**POWER STONE COLLECTION** **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** Capcom | **Web** capcom.com "Slaps a broad smile on your face. Perfectly suited to handheld play and will brighten up anyone's day." **PSM3 Rating** 86% 74%	**DEF JAM: THE TAKEOVER** **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA | **Web** ea.com "Where other fighting games fee floaty, every punch and stomp carries weight. Brutal." **PSM3 Rating** 85% 84%
ODDBALL	**GITAROO MAN LIVES!** **Pub** Koei | **Dev** Koei | **Web** koei.co.uk "A rhythm action game with all the visual flair of a Japanese anime and the most eclectic soundtrack ever." **PSM3 Rating** 90% 85%	**EVERY EXTEND EXTRA** **Pub** Q Entertainment | **Dev** Bandai **Web** everyextendextra.com "You play a bomb. Blow up everything in your radius and get combos for massive points. Very good indeed." **PSM3 Rating** 83% 72%	**ME AND MY KATAMARI** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Namco **Web** katamari.namco.com "There are few experiences like rolling a sticky ball over a flock of penguins." **PSM3 Rating** 81% 85%
SHOOTERS/ SHOOT-'EM-UPS	**KILLZONE: LIBERATION** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Guerilla | **Web** killzone.com "The FPS has been ditched for a friendly 3D set-up. A massively enjoyable blaster that suits PSP perfectly." **PSM3 Rating** 85% 77%	**SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO** **Pub** SCEE | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom-game.com "*Fireteam Bravo* not only looks lush on the tiny screen, it handles like a dream as well. A seamless experience." **PSM3 Rating** 83% 79%	**ACE COMBAT X** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Namco | **Web** acecombatgame.com "Plenty similar to recent PS2 efforts, but the multi-player side makes it well worth a look." **PSM3 Rating** 80% 78%

Cash-in Got a popular series? Quick! Make an ill-advised spin-off!

DOG ROUGH

Final Fantasy VII: Dirge Of Cerberus

Pub Square Enix | **Dev** Square Enix
Web dirgeofcerberus.net
Final Fantasy lovers are among the most rabid in fandom, but even they must have balked at having to fork out *actual money* for a ropey third-person shooter with Vincent Valentine shoehorned in. Bah.
PSM3 Rating 51%

OFFSIDE

Pro Evolution Soccer Management

Pub Konami | **Dev** Konami
Web konami-europe.com
The beauty of *PES* is in creating and scoring wonderfully-crafted goals for yourself. Just watching the computer score them for you after tinkering with a half-assed tactical system, however, isn't. Go figure.
PSM3 Rating 65%

D.O.A

Death By Degrees

Pub Sony | **Dev** Namco
Web deathbydegrees.namco.com
Does anyone really love *Tekken*'s Nina Williams enough to want her to have her own game? Especially when said game is a dire action scrapper? Nobody, that's who. *DBD* is so poor it makes *Tekken*'s Devil Within mode look great. Almost.
PSM3 Rating 42%

Disagree with our choices? Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

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Nice Apps

Tick up your console

Got the chills

App PS3 pad – with cooling fans...
Web logitech.com

There's an enormously slim chance that, by the time you read this, you'll actually own an import PS3. If so, you might want a new pad, like, for instance, the Chillstream – a controller with fans within to stop your hands getting sweaty and slipping away from the controls. Sounds gimmicky? Yep, it is, and it's not wireless either. Still, should you want a non-official pad – though we all know Sony's pads have always micturated on third-party efforts – and you miraculously own a PS3 already, you might want to experience the novelty of this one, as mental as it may be.

Listen up

App Ultimate Game Chair
Web ultimategamechair.com

After the ludicrous gaming bed of two months ago comes the rather less stupid Ultimate Gaming Chair. Basically, it's a reclining chair with speakers inside, plus, erm, some flashing lights and a rumble function, which might pacify the oddly large number of people complaining about the lack of said function in PS3's pad. Whether this is worth the rather hefty price tag kind of relies on how keen you are on the idea of a reclining, rumbling seat. Seems daft to us, though.

That's a rap

App Parappa PSP pouch | **Web** jp.playstation.com

Another month, another novelty way for you to carry your PSP around. This is one our favourites, though – it's Parappa the Rapper in carrycase form, which is enough to touch even the stoniest of hearts. Except Milf's, obviously. We love Parappa and are eagerly awaiting his PSP gaming debut. This'll do in the meantime, though. And only seven quid, too. Aces.

Rap it up **Oh, look. We love this pouch.**

Early Warning System

Your PlayStation release schedule

Game	Publisher	Out	Format	Want it? Tick it!
Superman Returns	EA	Nov 24	PS2	☐
Phantasy Star Universe	Sega	Nov 24	PS2	☐
Thrillville	Atari	Nov 24	PS2	☐
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Activision	Nov 24	PS2	☐
Call Of Duty 3	Activision	Nov 24	PS2	☐
Mortal Kombat: Unchained	Midway	Nov 24	PSP	☐
Silent Hill Origins	Konami	Nov 24	PSP	☐
Sonic Rivals	Sega	Nov 24	PSP	☐
Hot Pxl	Atari	Nov 24	PSP	☐
Justice League Heroes	Eidos	Nov 24	PSP	☐
Prince Of Persia: Rival Swords	Ubisoft	Nov 24	PSP	☐
Earthworm Jim	Atari	Nov 24	PSP	☐
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	Bethesda	Nov 24	PS2	☐
World Snooker Challenge 2007	Sega	Nov 24	PSP	☐
ATV Offroad Fury Pro	Sony	Nov 24	PSP	☐
NBA 2007	EA	Nov 24	PSP	☐
Crazy Frog Racer 2	Digital Jesters	Nov 24	PS2	☐
Crusty Demons	Deep Silver	Nov 24	PS2	☐
TOCA Race Driver 3	Sony	Dec 1	PSP	☐
Crazy Frog Racer 2	Turtle Games	Dec 1	PS2	☐
King Of Fighters XI	Ignition	Dec 8	PS2	☐
Rayman Raving Rabbids	Ubisoft	Dec 8	PS2	☐
Rainbow Six Vegas	Ubisoft	Dec 8	PSP	☐
Guilty Gear: Judgement	THQ	Dec 8	PSP	☐
Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII	Square Enix	Dec 15	PSP	☐
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	Ubisoft	Dec 15	PS2	☐
Combat Elite: WW2 Paratroopers	Deep Silver	Dec 22	PS2	☐
Battlestations Midway	Eidos	Dec 22	PS2	☐
God Of War 2	Sony	Jan 19	PS2	☐
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	Activision	Jan 26	PS2	☐
State Of Emergency 2	South Peak	Jan 26	PSP	☐
Final Fantasy XII	Square Enix	Jan 26	PS2	☐
DIRT	Deep Silver	Jan 26	PS2	☐
Okami	Capcom	Feb 9	PS2	☐
God Hand	Capcom	Feb 16	PS2	☐
Test Drive Unlimited	Atari	Feb 16	PS2	☐
PlayStation 3 launches in UK	Sony	March	PS3	☐
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	Sony	Mar 30	PSP	☐
Virtua Tennis 3	Sega	Mar 30	PSP	☐
Ratchet And Clank: Size Matters	Konami	Mar 30	PSP	☐

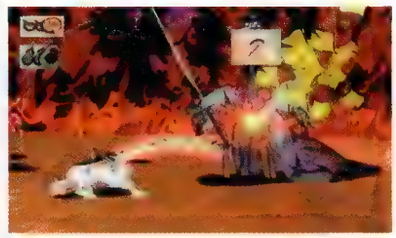
Caution: all release dates are accurate at time of press but liable to drastic change

Phantasy Star Universe

in which the famed online RPG gets a proper single-player mode as well. A last, welcome shot in the online arm for PS2 before PS3 finally arrives.

Rayman Raving Rabbids

Better than *Crash*, worse than *Jak* and *Ratchet*... it can only be *Rayman*. The PS3 version looks surprisingly good. Will the PS2 game be the same?



Okami

Capcom's beautiful wolf-'em-up is still a distance away, but worth marking on your calendar. Clover, the studio behind this game, has been closed. Sob.

eBaY Going, Going, Gone PlayStation auction action

Katamari cuddly toy

AWW

Ah, sweet. It's a soft toy of the Prince from *Katamari* and it's cuter than baby kittens. A popular item as well, judging by the profit made and the number of bidders clamouring to purchase it. The person who made it is promising to create an entire soft toy Katamari world, complete with stuff to pick up as well. How that's going to work, we don't know – but it sounds ace.

Sold $42 **Original Price** $0.01
Profit $41.99

Copy of *MGS3* signed by Hideo Kojima

Gosh, an actual proper gaming collectible – a copy of *Metal Gear 3* signed by Koj in 2005, with some pics of the seller with Koj to prove its authenticity. Sounds like the sort of thing people would clamour for, but not, clearly, at that somewhat steep price tag. Mind you, when it was first listed, the asking price was $800! You could buy a PS3 for that.

Sold Nope **Original Price** $200
Profit $0

Scorpion from *Mortal Kombat* costume

TACKY

Thought the people in last month's cosplay feature were a bit, well, cutesy. A bit saccharin? Not hard enough? Well, now you can start your own *Mortal Kombat* cosplay society by buying some horrible black and gold pyjamas from the internet. The seller was also flogging a Sub-Zero outfit, if he's rather more your bag. Us, we'll stick to Japanese girls dressed as Sora, ta.

Sold $9.00 **Original Price** $4.99
Profit $4.01

ON THE DISC
See what PS3 is capable of on your free DVD

PlayStation 3 The Facts

The latest facts and figures from the world of PS3 updated monthly

The price Less than £400?

Still no official word on price but the news that the 60Gb machine will be cheaper than expected in Japan could mean good news for Europe. Less than £400? Prices in Euros have been announced: 20Gb version = €499, 60Gb = €599. That converts to £339 and £408, but insiders (i.e. PSM3) are predicting that the 20Gb version won't be released in the UK.

The launch date March

So this is how long it's going to be until PlayStation 3 arrives in Europe. Bah. Of course, in Japan and the US, it's a matter of mere days from now. Curse you, Sony. Anyway, no telling exactly what date PS3 will launch in Europe now. Our guess is March 23. Check your free wallchart for money saving tips.

The launch games

These won't be confirmed until the week before launch but here are our day one March 2007 predictions (with our favourites in red).

Game	Publisher
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII	Ubisoft
Call Of Duty 3	Activision
EA Sports Fight Night Round 3	EA
F.E.A.R.	Vivendi
Full Auto 2 Battlelines	Sega
Genji: Days of the Blade	Sony
Madden NFL 07	EA
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	Activision
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	Namco Bandai
NBA 07	EA
NBA 2K7	2K Sports
Need For Speed: Carbon	EA
NHL 2K7	EA
Resistance: Fall of Man	Sony
Ridge Racer 7	Namco Bandai
Sonic the Hedgehog	Sega
The Elder Scrolls IV Oblivion	Bethesda
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	EA
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas	EA
Tony Hawk's Project 8	Acivision
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	Sony

How to get a PS3

By the time you read this PS3 will have been released in America and Japan. You can buy one right now (if you're lucky enough to find one and don't mind paying the incredible prices folk are bound to charge). You're better off waiting until March for a UK console. Want to stay up to the minute, super accurate? Then check out www.psm3mag.com. The moment a legit pre-order system goes live we'll tell you all about it there.

Motion-sensitive controller

The new PS3 pad doesn't vibrate. Instead it can sense tilt and movement. Want to turn a corner? Just twist the pad. We can confirm that it's super-light – even lighter than the PS2 pad despite its extra innards – and it works like a charm. We approve.

20Gb vs 60Gb

Will the 20Gb unit go on sale in the UK? Sony are yet to deny that it's on the way so there's still life in the 'ham-strung but cheaper' model yet. It has a 20Gb instead of a 60Gb and does without the Wi-Fi and memory card slots. However, Ken Kutaragi has said that it WILL have the HDMI output making it well worth considering.

HDMI support

Sony are playing PS3's HDMI fiddle reeeal loud. This all-digital port is now on both models of PS3 and delivers True HD sound and full HD 1080p pictures – both things that Xbox 360 with its analogue component output can't do. Question is, given that you can't really see the difference, does anyone care?

Blu-ray

PS3 plays Blu-ray discs – the brand new hi-def movie format that kicks DVD's ass. The very first (£1000) Blu-ray players are on sale now, or you can wait for PS3 in March 2007.

True HD sound

Dolby Digital 5.1, and EX 6.1 and 7.1 sound great but PS3 can do better. It supports Dolby True HD too – the format that's an exact copy of a movie's cinema soundtrack. DTHD amps are getting cheaper all the time but are still hundreds of notes right now.

PS3 specs appeal

	60Gb	20Gb
CPU	Cell Processor	
GPU	RSX	
Sound	Dolby 5.1ch, DTS, LPCM, etc. (Cell-based processing)	
Memory	256Mb XDR Main RAM, 256Mb GDDR3 VRAM	
BD/DVD/CD drive	Read only. Maximum read spead BD 2x (BD-ROM), DVD 8x (DVD-ROM), CD 24x (CD-ROM), SACD 2x	
Dimensions	Approximately 325mm by 98mm by 274mm	
Weight	Approx 5kg	
Communication	Ethernet x1, 1000BASE-T IEEE 802.11 b and g, Bluetooth 2.0 Controller Wireless (Bluetooth)	Ethernet x1, 1000BASE-T Bluetooth 2.0 Controller Wireless (Bluetooth)
Input/Output	USB 2.0 (x4) Memory Stick SD card Compact Flash Card	USB 2.0 (x4)
HDD	2.5" Serial ATA 60Gb	2.5" Serial ATA 20Gb

Got a PS3 question? Then we'll answer it. Send your next-gen console queries to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "PS3 question!"

Now Showing

Movies for your console

DVD New on DVD

Miami Vice

Director Michael Mann | **Starring** Colin Farrell, Jamie Foxx, Li Gong, Naomie Harris, Ciaran Hinds

The film of the '70s TV show, spruced up and full of big explosions and even bigger guns. Farrell and Foxx run about, shooting baddies and seducing women. It's more classic no-brainer stuff, and the best of an oddly quiet pre-Xmas period.

UMD selection

Superman Returns

Director Bryan Singer | **Starring** Brandon Routh, Kate Bosworth, Kevin Spacey, James Marsden

This is practically the only film out on UMD this month. Fortunately, it's a decent one, seeing Superman, well, returning. Clue's in the title, there. There's loads of over-the-top action, suitably slushy bits involving Lois Lane and Kevin Spacey's a riot as Lex Luthor, but you can't help but feel that it's just a tad overlong. Given the range of movies available for the format, though, this is pretty much essential.

Blu-ray choice

The Usual Suspects

Director: Bryan Singer | **Starring** Stephen Baldwin, Gabriel Byrne, Kevin Spacey, Benicio Del Toro

There haven't been any good Blu-ray movies released in Britain this month, so it's back to importing for you early adopters. And it's a second Singer/Spacey collaboration, this time on what can legitimately be termed an absolute classic. Five crooks do one final job together, but it all goes horribly wrong. Who is the infamous man controlling everything, Keyser Soze? We expect you know the answer to this by now, mind you, but a must-have high-def disc all the same.

PSM3 Tunes Where you get great music for free

See Saw
Boy Kill Boy
A B-side from the lanky-haired Brit-rockers that you might not have heard, this song lodges in your head permanently.
Get it: boykillboy.com

I Am Theoretical Girl
Theoretical Girl
Electro-pop with more hooks than an over-stocked fishing shop.
Get it: myspace.com/theoreticalgirl-tunes

Talk, Talk, Talk, Talk
Love Is All
There's a sax in this, but forgive it – this is a psychedelic rush that hits harder than Geoff Capes wielding a bag of horseshoes.
Get it: www.loveisall.se

Walk With Me In Hell
Lamb Of God
The kind of terrifying metal we wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley. Makes us wee in fear.
Get it: myspace.com/lambofgod

Send In The Boys
Milburn
Thrashy excellence from the Arctic Monkeys' Sheffield brethren. Top.
Get it: myspace.com/milburnmusic

Are U That Somebody
The Gossip
Mangled guitar goodness from one of music's next big things.
Get it: myspace.com/thegossip

Jimmy Down The Well
Monkey Swallows The Universe
Rammed with handclappery, this is a song that teaches us that, if you spurn a woman, don't expect her not to laugh when you fall down a well. A lovely hug in a hot indie mug.
Get it: myspace.com/mstu

@ **Tune-up** Send your MP3/music links and we'll stick 'em in the mag. Email: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "Music!"

Object of Desire

You might not be able to afford it, but it's still gorgeous

Sony Ericsson W950i Über mobile phone

Phones have been getting smaller, but there comes a time when men with fat hands need to take a stand. The W950i says 'no' to tiny screens, 'no' to tiny buttons and 'no' to a tiny on-board memory. Say hello to big boy...

OK, it's large (106mm by 54mm by 15mm thick) but it has to be to get the enormous 2.6inch touch screen on board. Yes, it's the PSP of phones, with an massive full colour screen that's as perfect for dialling through your MP3 collection as it is for reading emails, or viewing movies, photos and web pages.

The built-in Opera 8 web browser, combined with the touch screen lets you browse full size webpages from the 'proper' internet (rather than some half-arsed chopped-out mobile network version) and tap hyperlinks with the included slide-out stylus.

Want more? Well, the 3G features give you rapid data downloads and incoming video calls and finally the massive 4Gb on board memory gives you enough space for a thousand MP3 songs on board, ready to be replayed via the sleek supplied headphones.

Things we don't like? The lack of a camera will ruin this phone for many, but the web, email, touch screen and music features put this in a class of its own.

Tech Spec
Price Free on monthly contract
Features Full web browser, 4Gb internal memory, touchscreen
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Join 10p
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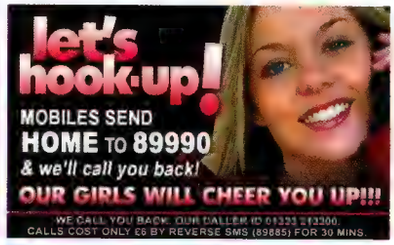
let's hook-up!
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HOME TO 89990
& we'll call you back!
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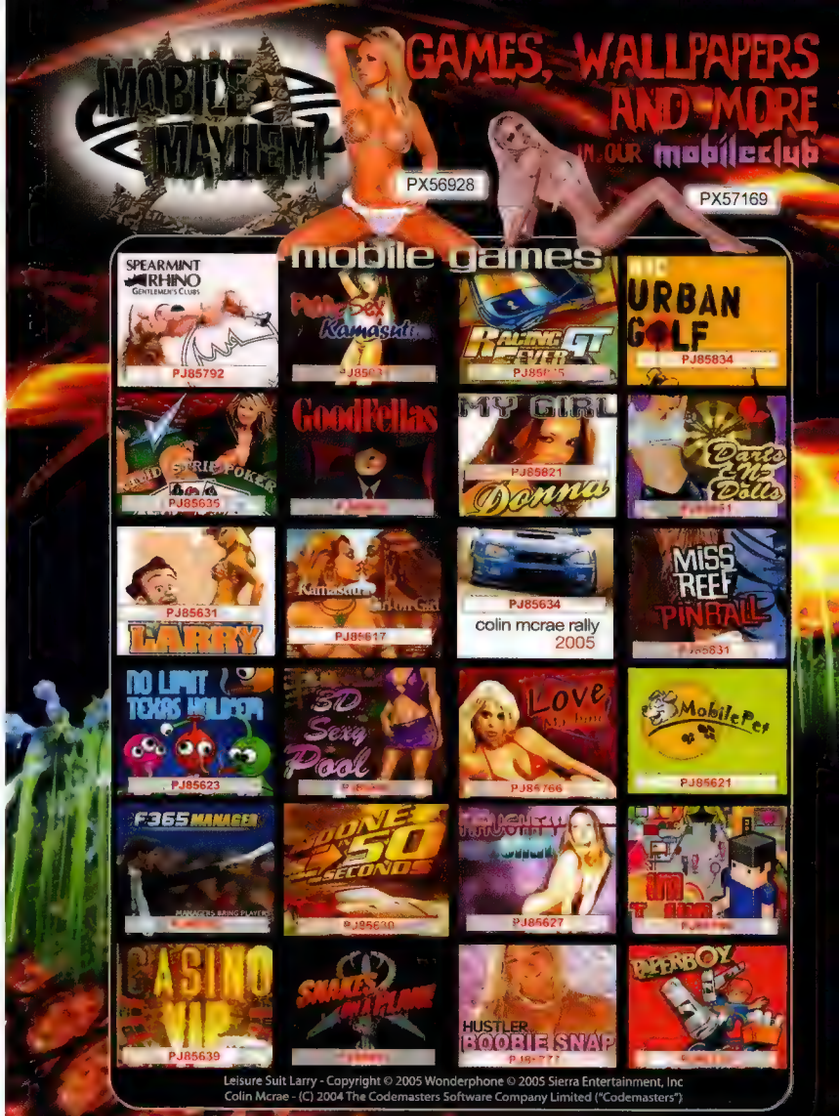

Mobile Mayhem is a subscription service offering tones, wallpapers & animations for £3 per week until you send STOP to 88011. Celeb Look-a-Likes is a subscription club charged at £3.00 every four days. Text STOP to 69555 to stop your service. Over 16 only. Java Games cost £4.50, and feature new game choices billed at £4.50 each week until you send STOP to 88011. All products require a WAP enabled handset. Customers will also incur normal operator sms and wap charges. For customer support - email help@blingmob.com or call 0870 063 1182 (Weekdays, 9am to 5pm) or post - BLiNG!Mob BCM Box 2952 London WC1N 3XX.

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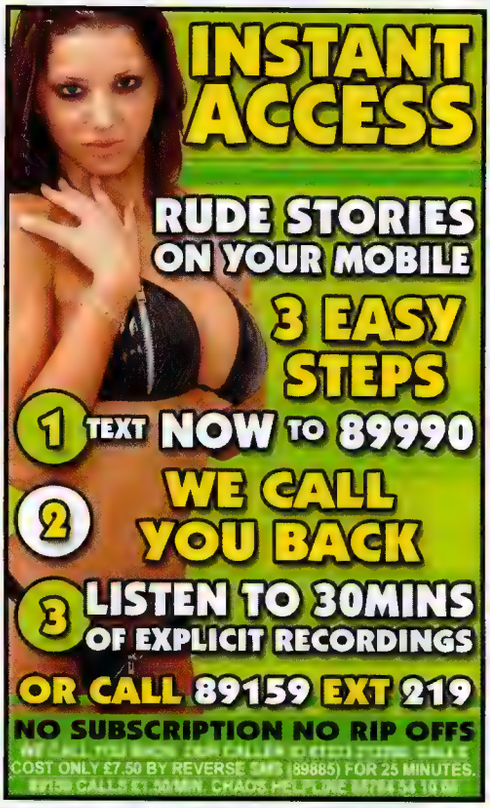
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3 EASY STEPS
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3 LISTEN TO 30MINS OF EXPLICIT RECORDINGS
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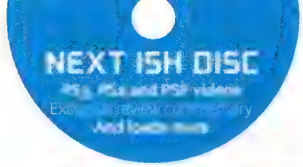
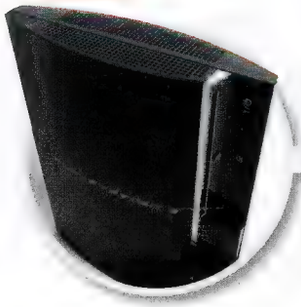


5 things to remember this month



PS3 really was worth the wait
"You're in no doubt that this is the king of consoles"
page 48

***Call Of Duty 3* is beautifully brutal**
"Failure will see you stabbed through the heart."
page 64

A scary baby sells you PlayStation 3
"Sony's chilling new ad makes their previous efforts look sane."
page 118

***Guitar Hero 2* is better than ever**
"Orange notes are our drug, and we've been desperate for a fix"
page 74

Music is seductive
"Play guitar for your girlfriend in *Fahrenheit* and you're at it like rabbits."
page 102

Next issue on sale
Thursday December 21

1. **Every PlayStation3 game reviewed! Don't miss this!**
2. Sony's online store – we go shopping on PS3. Check out what's in our baskets
3. PS3 launches in Japan – we'll be there and we're going to buy you one
4. Superman Returns – the PSM3 verdict on Supe's (criminal?) crimebuster
5. And the results of the PSM3 reader awards! Vote now (see page 17)

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ABC PSM3 35,993 Jan to June 2006

PS3 online - choose your name now!

And make sure it's a good one

If internet rumours are to be believed, from November 9 you'll be able to register a user ID for the PS3 online network. This means that you can reserve your 'handle' so that when March rolls around you won't be disappointed because a 14-year-old Texan child with the same name as you got there first. Nice, eh? Keep checking the official PlayStation 3 website (http://uk.playstation.com/ps3/) and hope they let you register your ID come November.

Be warned though, by the time you read this the following IDs will almost certainly be taken...*

HIV_Man
EX MANIACO
wootburgers
The_Pwnographer
WHITE_POWER
DrugSmoker
BoNGLoRD
KICKURBALLS
LOS_LOCOS_666
SPLIFF2000
frostieskidmustdie
HERMAN THE TOSSER
James_Bong_ooSpliff
Han Solo (followed by any number at all from 1 to infinity)
Any name at all ending in the number 69

*all genuine PS2 online names we've seen

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See Michelle Marsh strut her stuff in this hot under the collar game!

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Get hot love tips from a kamsutra love master in this hot game!

SPEARMINT RHINO — 29330
This exciting and enticing mobile game based on the Spearmint Rhino.

STRIP POKER — 36156
Take Strip Poker to a new level with this hot babe!

KAYLEIGH PEARSON STRIP — 24703
Work against the clock to get Kayleigh Pearson to strip off...

Arcade!

SPONGEBOB THE MOVIE — 36775
SpongeBob is making a big splash in a new mini game based adventure!

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Classic arcade shoot-em -ups! three games for the price of one!

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GAMES OF WEEK

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25959

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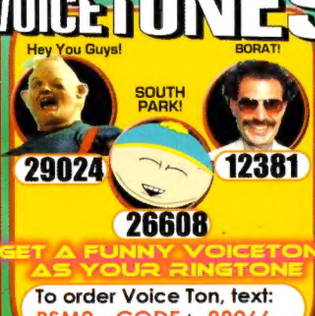

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